Malaysia bolsters security to stop Moro rebs

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BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

MONDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2001 ★ 90 PAGES 8 SECTIONS VOL.16 NO. 358 ₱15

'Influential? Who, me?'

By Fe Zamora
INQ7

DI AKO MALAKAS SA KANYA! CLOSE LANG KAMI!

DANTE Ang, President Macapagal-Arroyo's personal publicist, said yesterday he exercised no influence over her, and challenged his detractors to "name one

INFLUENTIAL/ A20

Malacañang blinks on coco levy deal

Protests may force GMA to rethink settlement plan

REMEMBERING 'SI AKO'

DENNIS SABANGAN

Militant women, led by the Womyn Supporting Womyn Center, denounce aggression against women as they pay their last respects to former beauty queen Maria Theresa Carlson, an alleged victim of spousal violence, at the Quezon City Memorial Circle on Sunday.

By Carlito Pablo,
Christine Gaylican
and Delfin Mallari Jr.

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo may reject a compromise agreement on the coconut levy funds, which her private publicist considers an almost done deal, because of growing objections.

Presidential spokesperson Rigoberto Tiglao said that while Ms Macapagal was "still interested in having the funds mobilized, the problem obviously now is that a lot of other groups are insistent on not having a compromise deal."

The deal was agreed upon by farmers' groups, the Philippine Coconut Producers Federation chaired by Zamboanga City Mayor Maria Clara Lobregat and businessman Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr. in a meeting in Davao City on Sept. 27. It was signed on Oct. 28.

"If there are strong objections from other groups, the President would, of course, take these objections and study them," Tiglao told reporters in a teleconference.

Asked if the President would reject a compromise deal if protests reached a certain level, Tiglao said: "It would depend."

Opposition to the compromise deal is growing.

Today, four members of the House of Representatives are expected to file a bill seeking to block the agreement.

Representatives Loretta Ann Rosales (Akbayan partylist), Rafael

MALACAÑANG/ A20

No money involved in deal, says aide

By Donna S. Cueto

UNLIKE in the three previous administrations, the negotiations to settle the P130 billion in coconut levy funds under the Macapagal administration do not involve discussions of a commission, according to Norberto Gonzales Jr., presidential adviser for special concerns.

"This process of settlement is one without any backroom discussion of commissions," Gonzales, who described himself as "behind-the-scenes man" for the President, said Saturday.

Gonzales, along with Ms Macapagal, her husband Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo and her brother Diosdado Macapagal Jr., is accused by the People's Consultative Assembly (PCA) of seeking a P20-billion commission from any settlement of the coco levy funds.

He said Linda Montayre, PCA secretary general, was spreading allegations about him and the President's brother as part of a "systematic campaign to catch the President's attention."

Gonzales said that during the administrations of Corazon Aquino, Fidel V. Ramos and Joseph Estrada, the coco levy settlement being pushed then involved commissions for "some people."

"During the time of Cory Aquino, there was no real settlement of the coco levy issue because some people wanted a commission. And the commission was about 4 percent—that's about P4 billion," he said.

"During the time of Ramos, there was also a group that wanted a commission from the coco levy," Gonzales said.

He said that while Agrarian Secretary Horacio "Boy" Morales during the Estrada administration introduced "transparent" negotiations, there was "a lot of backroom negotiations" for commissions.

NO MONEY/A20

HK maids protest minimum wage cuts

HONG KONG—Waving banners and chanting slogans, Filipino and other foreign maids on Sunday rallied to protest a proposal to cut their minimum wage for a second time in two years.

A procession of domestic helpers from the Philippines, Indonesia, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand marched 3.2 km from Victoria Park to the government headquarters, urging Hong Kong officials to take a pay cut instead.

"This is very unjust, very immoral and very inhumane," said Eman C. Villanueva, secretary general of the United Filipinos in Hong Kong, an organization of domestic helpers.

"People who are proposing this cut are receiving six-digit salaries per month, we are receiving less than HK$4,000 (US$513) per month for the very difficult, dangerous and dirty jobs," Villanueva said.

The maids tied around their heads red strips of cloth painted with "No to another wage cut." They held up placards with pictures of senior civil servants and their salaries printed underneath: "Chief Secretary Donald Tsang, HK$216,650 (US$27,775) per month. Secretary of Education and Manpower Bureau Fanny Law, HK$178,000 per month. Choy So-yuk, chair of the Legislative Council, HK$178,000 per month."

Above the placards, two protesters held a banner asking: "Who deserves a wage cut?"

Hong Kong's government is proposing to cut by 15-20 percent the minimum HK$3,670 (US$470) monthly wage of foreign domestic helpers starting next year to help ease the financial burden of their employers amid the economic slow down.

HK/ A20

Prober chides Serge on ransom disclosure

By Christine Avendaño
and Carlito Pablo

WHY only now?

A member of the congressional committee investigating the Abu Sayyaf's escape from a hospital in Lamitan, Basilan, on June 2 questioned Sen. Sergio Osmeña III's disclosure the other day that he had helped the government pay ransom.

Valenzuela Rep. Magtanggol Gunigundo said Osmeña should have told the Senate committee conducting a parallel inquiry on the incident, which also resulted in the "escape" of businessman Reghis Romero and two other hostages, whatever he knew of the alleged ransom payment.

But Gunigundo, a member of the House committee on national defense, expressed surprise over Osmeña's disclosure.

He said it was a "big puzzle" for him why the government allegedly asked Osmeña's help when Mindanao was not exactly the senator's turf.

In Malacañang, presidential spokesperson Rigoberto Tiglao

PROBER/ A21

Hussin, Mutilan set to be proclaimed today

By Blanche S. Rivera
and Edwin O. Fernandez
PDI Mindanao Bureau

THE COMMISSION on Elections is set to proclaim today the new governor and vice governor of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao, a week after what was considered the most peaceful balloting in the region's 10-year history.

Administration candidates Dr. Parouk Hussin and his running mate, Dr. Mahid Mutilan, are the virtual winners based on latest Comelec official canvassing results and the National Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel) tally.

New and old faces will compose the ARMM's 24-member Regional Legislative Assembly (RLA) following the proclamation of winners on Friday.

As of 4:30 p.m. yesterday, Hussin was leading the Comelec count with 310,027 votes, while his closest rival, Mayor Ibrahim Paglas III, has 124,348 votes.

Mutilan was also faring well with 256,155 votes, edging opposition candidate and early leader Ben-

HUSSIN/ A21

US, UK troops prepare to raid Bin Laden caves

KABUL—The Taliban citadel of Kandahar was under relentless pressure Sunday, hammered ferociously by US warplanes and threatened by local forces bent on wiping out the Islamic militia's last major redoubt.

Further north near the eastern city of Jalalabad, the Tora Bora cave complex believed to be a hideout of Osama bin Laden was bombed again overnight, according to the Afghan Islamic Press.

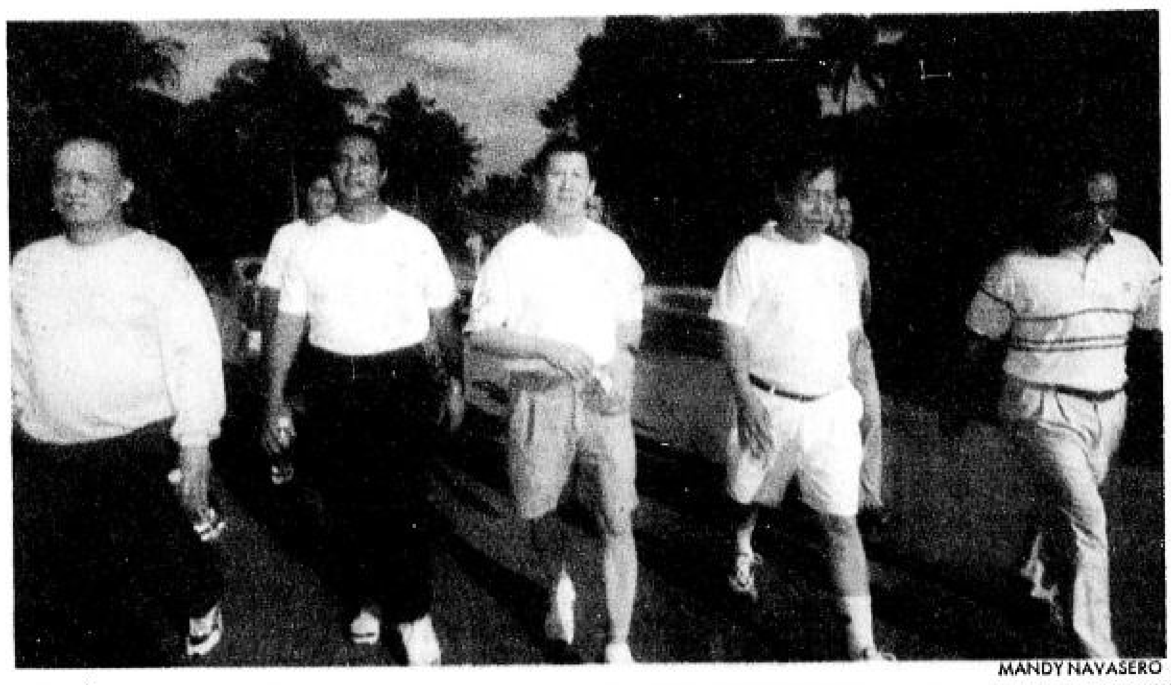
The air attacks followed reports that British and US elite special forces troops were preparing to raid Tora Bora, one of the mountain lairs identified by US officials as likely Bin Laden strongholds.

More conventional US forces—Task Force 58 of more than 1,000 Marines—sent armored patrols out from their makeshift base in the desert south of Kandahar, as tribal forces advanced from the north and east.

The Marines, backed by air and naval support, were within striking distance of Kandahar, carrying the implicit threat of an assault on the Taliban's capital in cooperation with the anti-Taliban tribal militias.

They were also on the lookout for members of Bin Laden's al-Qaida network and Taliban fighters in the vicinity, particularly from Kandahar west to the town of Lashka Gar.

US/ A4



MANDY NAVASERO

CHIEF'S THRILL

In one of the rare times he is seen in public without his stately robe, Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. (fourth, from left) leads a sweltering pack in his favorite sport, fast walking, when he marked his third year in office on Nov. 30 at a country club in Silang, Cavite. With him are (from left) Judge Raul de Leon, Mayor Ruben Madlansacay, Deputy Court Administrator Christopher Lock and retired Col. Honorio Azcueta.

TALAGA?
WALA NANG
URUNGAN, HA?

Second FRONT PAGE

Marcelo vows to stay and fight

PACIFICO "Pic" Marcelo III, the businessman who boasts that he can bring down a presidency, yesterday said he was not backing down and taking back his charges of corruption against President Macapagal-Arroyo despite what he claimed were Malacañang-directed efforts to "silence" him.

"Nothing has changed, I am not running away from this fight," said Marcelo who claimed the Palace has so far failed to blunt his allegations that Ms Macapagal herself had tried to obtain control of a telecommunications company he had set up.

Marcelo said the Palace damage-control operation was being directed by the Carpio, Villaraza and Cruz law firm, the same company which he claimed had tried to wrest 51 percent of his Philippine Communications Clearinghouse Inc. on behalf of the President.

Marcelo noted that recently appointed Supreme Court Justice Antonio Carpio and Presidential Legal Counsel Avelino "Nonong" Cruz belonged to this law firm.

Presidential spokesperson Rigoberto Tiglao yesterday denied allegations that the Palace was trying to stop Marcelo from testifying before the Senate blue ribbon committee.

"We want Mr. Marcelo to be heard so his lies will be properly exposed," Tiglao told reporters in a teleconference call.

Tiglao said Malacañang was not seeking to influence (committee chair) Sen. Joker Arroyo, whom he described as "an independent-minded lawmaker."

Tiglao said Marcelo's testimony before the Senate would "end all this" controversy because it will be exposed as a complete fabrication.

Marcelo said the Carpio, Villaraza, Cruz law office had tried but failed to get three of his business associates to execute sworn statements to deny his charges against Ms Macapagal.

These associates were Leo San Miguel, Leah Vargas Ledesma and Juliet Marcelino.

Marcelo said the three have refused to desert him unlike their three other partners who have issued affidavits contradicting Marcelo's charges against Ms Macapagal.

He said three of his PCCI partners—Dante Madriaga, Voltaire Alcantara and Guillermo Yanza—had signed sworn statements denouncing him on the urging of the Carpio, Villaraza and Cruz law office.

Marcelo said that San Miguel was asked to sign an affidavit similar to those executed by Madriaga, Yanza and Alcantara the week before Marcelo submitted his sworn statement to the Senate on Nov. 26.

"This government wants to silence me by turning around people I have trusted," he said, but he was not backing down.

"I may be down but I'm not throwing in the towel," he said.

The businessman is being hounded by the Bureau of Immigration and Deportation and the National Bureau of Investigation because of suspicions he is a US citizen and in probable violation of the Anti-Dummy Law which prohibits foreigners from owning telecommunications companies.

He has also been linked to Jaime Dichaves, the crony of jailed ex-President Joseph Estrada who is believed to have had a large influence in the conduct of telecommunications policies at the transport and communications department during Estrada's short-lived presidency. *Carlito Pablo*

FRIENDS, FOES

Joker slams Nene over Marcelo case

SEN. Joker Arroyo yesterday lashed out at Senate Minority Leader Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. for threatening to remove the investigation of the alleged telecommunications franchise scam from the blue ribbon committee which Arroyo chairs.

"The problem with Nene Pimentel is this, he is very good with you in private but will kick you from behind in public over matters which you have been made to believe have been settled already in public and in private," said Arroyo in a statement.

Arroyo was Pimentel's lawyer during martial law and the two have maintained a cordial relationship despite being on opposite sides of the political fence.

Arroyo was reacting to Pimentel's assertion that the minority would seek the creation of a select committee to probe the telecoms case if Arroyo refused to hear the testimony of witness Pacifico Marcelo.

He said Pimentel knew his committee would call on Marcelo to testify because Arroyo had said so on the Senate floor in answer to a question from Pimentel himself.

But as he explained to his colleagues last Tuesday, Arroyo said the committee would have to tackle first the probes into the coco levy funds dispute, the alleged foreign bank accounts of Sen. Panfilo Lacson and the Ninoy Aquino International Airport III controversy before it could resume the hearings on the telecom franchise scam.

Arroyo said the committee had already held three sessions on the telecom case in which 80 percent of the questions were from the minority senators "hoping to pin down (First Gentleman Jose Miguel) Mike Arroyo."

He said that with the minority finding "a new herald (Marcelo) whose target this time is the President," it wants the committee to "drop everything it is doing and give way to hear its new hero," Arroyo said.

Arroyo noted that Marcelo only surfaced after giving the committee "a wild goose chase looking for him for 45 days."

Arroyo said the blue ribbon committee had no "sacred cows" but expected respect for its processes and schedules.

The Senate minority is set to meet today to decide "whether or not to continue its policy of cooperation and partnership with the Senate majority in the wake of efforts to harass Marcelo."

The majority's handling of the Marcelo affair had forced them to review their policy of full cooperation, Pimentel and Sen. Edgardo Angara said in a statement. *Rocky Nazareno*

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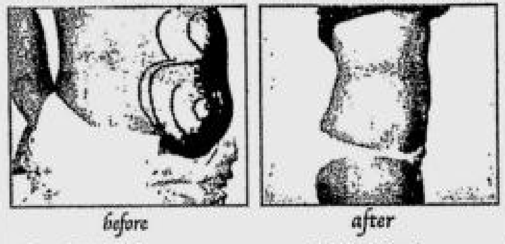

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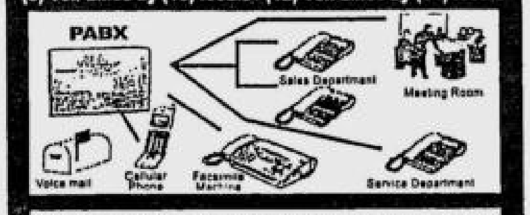

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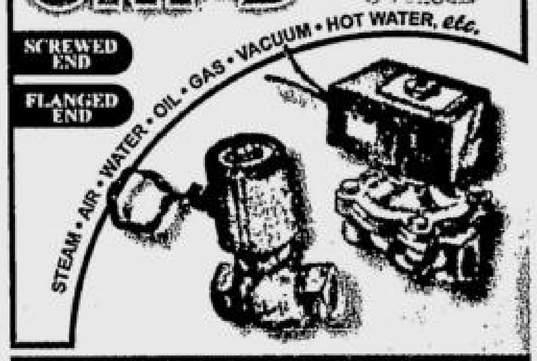

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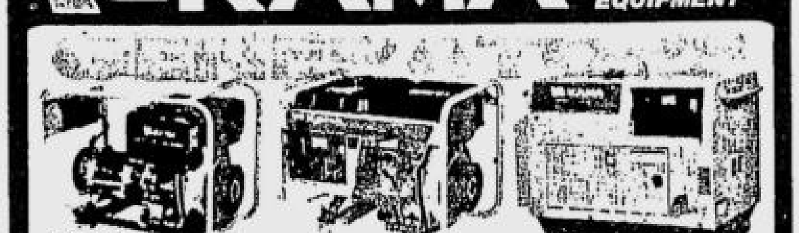

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AFP wants 20,000 more troops

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo's administration has asked Congress to authorize the recruitment of 20,000 more soldiers to fight growing communist and Muslim insurgencies in the country, military officials said yesterday.

"We are having a crisis of insurgency. We need additional men," said Lt. Gen. Jaime de los Santos, commander of the 68,000-member Philippine Army.

The budgetary request would allow the Army to boost its numbers by 29.4 percent to about 88,000 men, he told reporters.

"In Malaysia, they have more troops although they are not faced with insurgency and they have only a 24 million population," De los Santos added.

"The strength of the NPA is increasing," he said, referring to the communist New People's Army.

The military are battling 25,000 guerrillas, Army spokesperson Col. Jose Mabanta said.

There are an estimated 23,000 NPA as well as separatist Moro Islamic Liberation Front rebels, about a thousand Abu Sayyaf members and another 1,000 gunmen loyal to renegade Muslim leader Nur Misuari, he added.

"If we really want to finish this insurgency problem, we should be given more troops," he said, adding that the proposed recruitment program would activate 40 new battalions.

Mabanta said the Arroyo administration continued to conduct peace talks with the 11,000-member MILF and is trying to revive stalled negotiations with the National Democratic Front—the NPA's political wing—but "they are still shaky."

The MILF signed a ceasefire with Manila in September, but Manila suspended negotiations with the NDF in June after the NPA assassinated two members of Congress.

About 6,000 troops are hunting down the Abu Sayyaf in Basilan province where the gunmen are holding hostage two American missionaries and a Filipino nurse.

Misuari launched a failed rebellion in Jolo island and Zamboanga City last month, but the uprising was crushed by the Army. He was later arrested in Malaysia.

"It's funny, we have some 25,000 rebels in our midst and we still do not regard (ourselves as being) in an emergency situation," military spokesperson Brig. Gen. Edilberto Adan said in Baguio City on Saturday.

He said the NPA has 12,000 fighters, about double its numbers in the mid-1990s and that the government must draw up tougher anti-terrorism and anti-subversion laws. *AFP*

14 Moro rebs yield, lay down arms

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Fourteen Moro separatist guerrillas have surrendered in Lanao del Norte, the military said yesterday.

The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) unit handed over their weapons to Army representatives in the town of Baloi, near Iligan City, on Saturday, military spokesperson Col. Fredesvindo Covarrubias told reporters.

The rebels were led by Moin Ibrahim, the commander of the MILF's 4th Battalion, Covarrubias said.

"These people are tired of fighting and disgruntled with the leadership of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front," he added.

President Macapagal-Arroyo's government is holding peace talks with the 12,500-member MILF, which has been waging a 23-year guerrilla war. The two sides signed a ceasefire agreement in Malaysia last September. *AFP*

Bicol groups hit Marcelo, Montayre

By Christian V. Esguerra

SEVERAL Bicolano civic groups yesterday scored fellow Bicolanos Pacifico Marcelo and Linda Olaguer-Montayre for alleging that President Macapagal-Arroyo was involved in two recent supposed transactions.

The groups, led by the Pag-iribang Bicolnon, Bicol 2000 and the Bicol Foundation, asked the public not to believe Marcelo and Montayre, and described them as "willing tools of political groups out to destabilize the administration."

"We warn the public not to take the words of these people at face value. They lack credibility and sincerity to deal with public issues," the groups, including Bicol Saro, Bicol Kapihan and Bicol Forum, said in a statement.

Marcelo's allegation that Ms Macapagal had tried to take over his companies was "not only incredible but a product of a desperate mind," they said.

Marcelo's firms stood to rake in billions of pesos in a telecommunications monopoly had the President not vetoed their franchise.

The businessman's credibility was highly suspect, the groups added, since he is a close associate of Jaime Dichaves, who could be facing plunder charges along with deposed President Joseph Estrada for highly irregular deals during the latter's administration.

Lawyer Antonio Betito, Bicol Saro chairperson, said Montayre should not be believed when she accused Ms Macapagal of negotiating a P20-billion commission from businessman Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco to settle the P130-billion coconut levy issue.

Montayre, secretary general of the People's Consultative Assembly, received huge amounts of money from the Ramos administration for her projects in Albay, according to Betito, Lakas party district chairperson in Albay at the time.

Montayre used the money to finance her gubernatorial campaign, Betito said, where she lost to then incumbent Gov. Al Francis Bichara.

"She will fool a lot of people. The public should not believe her," Betito told the INQUIRER yesterday in an interview.

The Bicol-based civic groups said the accusations made by Montayre and Marcelo were part of a "systematic smear campaign" orchestrated by the political opposition to destabilize the Macapagal administration.

"We are tired of reading their ridiculous and concocted stories charging the President and her family with all kinds of illegal acts," they said.

Vicky G to protect GMA from ex-allies

By Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—Outgoing Presidential Management Staff chief Victoria "Vicky" Garchitorena appears to be going back to civil society to protect President Macapagal-Arroyo from former allies who have turned against her.

Speaking before editors and reporters at the 6th National Press Congress here yesterday, Garchitorena said she would help in revitalizing and reinventing the Kongreso ng Mamamayang Pilipino (Kompil), one of the core groups in the Edsa 2 movement that brought down ex-President Joseph Estrada.

She said the Kompil, of which she was one of the convenors, would offer Ms Macapagal a badly needed, mass-based anchor as she deals with the effects of the global economic downturn and allegations of wrongdoing.

She did not say how a revived Kompil would respond to the People's Consultative Assembly (PCA), another member of the Edsa 2 movement, which has accused Ms Macapagal of corruption.

Garchitorena said Kompil had "lain low" in the last 10 months of Ms Macapagal's government because its principal goal was to unite a "tactical alliance of the Left and the Right to rid us of a corrupt government."

She said Kompil had been meeting as early as two months ago following the Sept. 11 terror attacks in the United States.

Garchitorena, who is leaving the PMS at the end of this year, dismissed speculations about her resignation as "mere fabrications" of the newspapers which refuse to believe that her exit from Malacañang was cordial.

Shell cuts gas prices by 30 centavos per liter

PILIPINAS Shell Petroleum Corp. announced late last night that the pump price of gasoline, diesel and kerosene would be reduced by 30 centavos per liter effective 1 a.m. today, Dec. 3, 2001.

This brings the total reduction in gasoline prices to P1.54 per liter since October when crude prices in the international market started their downward trend.

"Once again, we are adjusting prices early this month to reflect the benefits of reduced crude oil prices in November," said Reynaldo Gamboa, Pilipinas Shell vice president for corporate affairs, in a press statement last night. The average price of crude in the world market is currently at $17.66 per barrel while the peso stands at P51.99 per US dollar.

"Should current crude prices and the peso value hold, we can expect another round of pump price reductions within the month to fully reflect the changes in world crude prices last month," Gamboa added.

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US, UK troops prepare to raid Bin Laden caves

(From page A1)

UN officials said thousands of refugees fled Kandahar toward Pakistan as US air raids, concentrating on the airport and some mountains to the south, had intensified to new levels since Friday night.

Opposition forces advanced toward the airport, according to a well-informed source close to former Kandahar Gov. Gul Agha, one of two Pashtun tribal elders leading the revolt against the Taliban.

"We made advances toward the airport. There was heavy bombing on and around the airport. We are trying to clear the way for Gul Agha," the source told AFP.

To the north of Kandahar, Pashtun elder and former Deputy Foreign Minister Hamid Karzai claimed on Saturday that his forces were meeting no resistance as they advanced to within 25 km of the city.

Karzai, a respected royalist who returned from exile with US backing to stir up unrest against the Taliban, has been touted as a possible leader of a new interim Cabinet to rule Afghanistan following the Taliban's collapse.

Heavy bombing

A senior Taliban official confirmed the city, the base of the movement's leader Mullah Mohammad Omar, was under heavy bombardment. But he said the militia that had ruled Afghanistan for five years would rather die than surrender.

"We have decided to defend Kandahar to our last. We will not hand over Kandahar to anyone," said Abdul Salam Zaeef, former ambassador to Pakistan. "Our leadership prefers death over humiliation."

But Karzai insisted negotiations were underway for a peaceful handover.

"Our advance has been absolutely peaceful and negotiations with Taliban officials in Kandahar are in progress," he said.

Residents who escaped the shattered city and made it across the Pakistan border said the Taliban fighters were trying to control the restive population—those people too poor to flee—with a ruthlessly enforced curfew.

Militia fighters had been ordered to shoot violators on sight.

"The situation is bad," Saadullah, a Kandahar shopkeeper who fled by taxi, said Saturday.

"The US planes were bombarding Taliban positions and mountains surrounding Kandahar but not the city itself," he said. "They were also targeting the city's airport. The bombing is now day and night for the last three days."

Tactical key

For US officials, the battle for Kandahar was just one tactical key in their search for Bin Laden, wanted for the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks in New York and Washington.

They have focused their hunt on two mountainous areas, one near Kandahar and one in the remote eastern region of Tora Bora about 50 km south of Jalalabad on the border with Pakistan.

Officials of the US Central Command in Tampa, Florida, confirmed Saturday that they had been bombing cave and tunnel systems near Jalalabad.

Britain's Mail on Sunday reported that a hand-picked squad of British special forces operatives just missed the world's most wanted man when they stormed one of Bin Laden's mountain strongholds.

Four soldiers from the elite Special Air Service (SAS) were wounded in a fierce battle in the caves of the Hada mountains, southeast of Kandahar, last month.

"We were within a whisker of getting him. It was a hard battle and will have put the fear of God into his people," said a source close to the regiment.

A senior British defense source told the Sunday Times that SAS soldiers had "honed and developed unique skills and experience" during the raid south of Kandahar in which 18 Afghans were killed.

The source said the 60-strong SAS squadron had been re-deployed to prepare for an attack alongside US special forces on Tora Bora, where Bin Laden is believed to be laying low with hundreds of die-hard followers.

Negotiations

In Germany, negotiations for a new Afghan government moved ahead after the Northern Alliance reversed itself and submitted nominees to serve on an interim administration alongside three other factions.

The Northern Alliance also said it no longer opposed international peacekeepers if the United Nations would set up the force.

Eager for a breakthrough, Washington has promised extensive aid if the Afghan factions would overcome age-old rivalries and agree to govern together.

Diplomats said the parties were near agreement on setting up an interim governing council with executive powers, but had put off discussions on a proposed bigger council with legislative functions. *Reports from AFP and AP*

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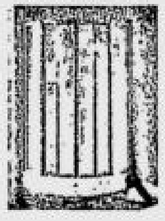

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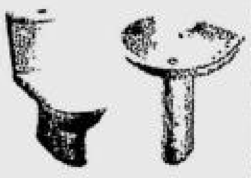

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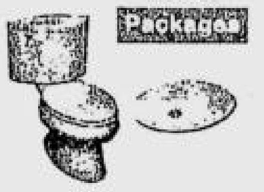

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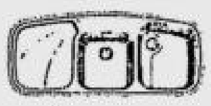

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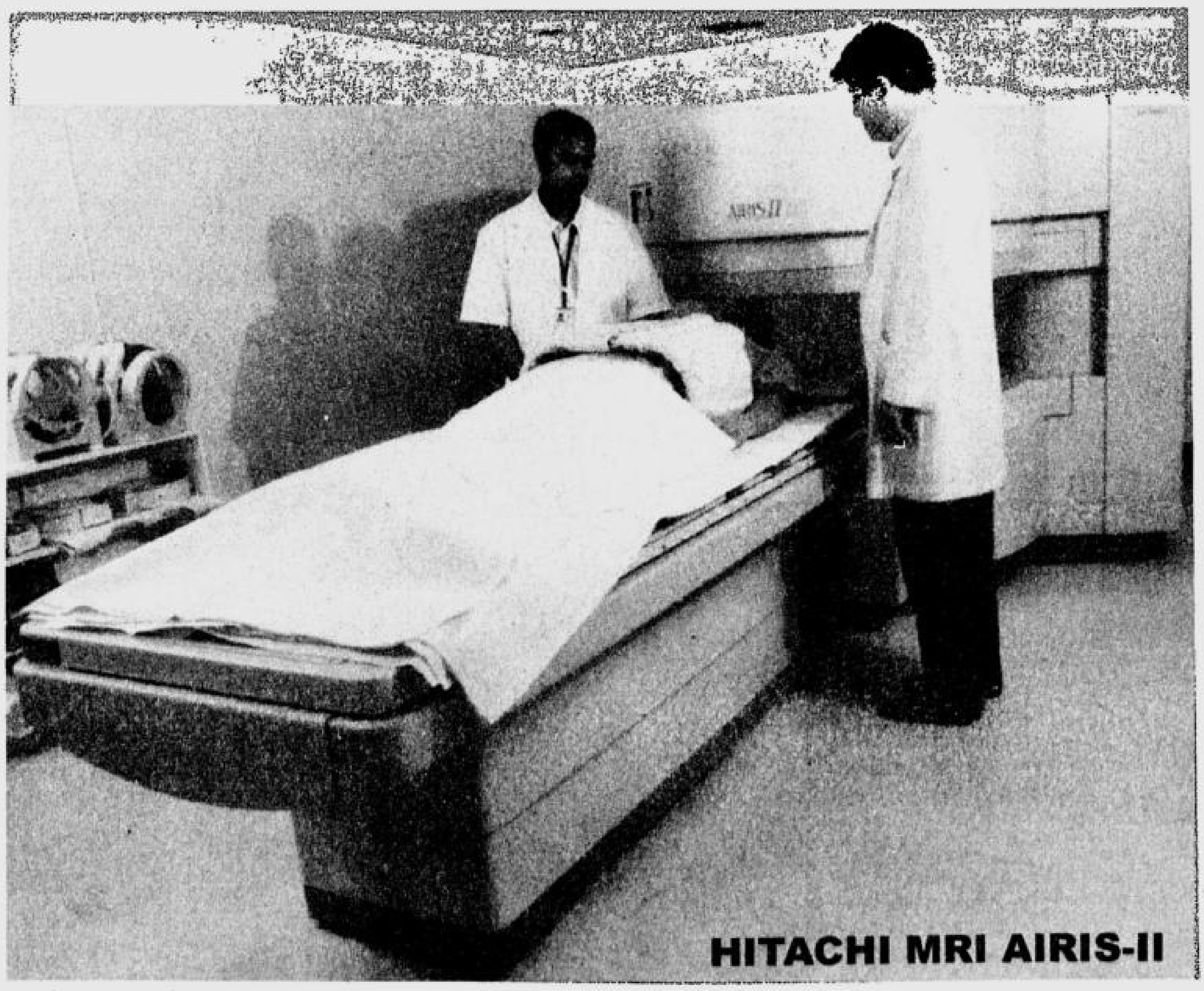

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Malaysia bolsters security to stop Moro rebs, refugees

KUALA LUMPUR—Malaysia bolstered border security Sunday with special commando teams and more combat ships to keep out rebels and refugees fleeing fighting between Philippine government troops and supporters of a renegade Muslim governor.

Defense Minister Najib Razak said the Malaysian army was ready to deal with any spillover from the restive Mindanao, where clashes have killed more than 100 people in the last two weeks.

Malaysia fears being used as a base for the rebel groups who may turn to kidnapping locals or tourists for ransom, national news agency Bernama cited Najib as saying.

The Malaysian armed forces are focusing on the northeastern state of Sabah which is only a few hours boat ride from Mindanao.

Thousands of Filipinos from this southern part of the archipelago have fled to Sabah over the last few years to escape decades of violence triggered by Muslim separatists seeking an independent state in the poverty-stricken Mindanao.

Nur Misuari, former leader of the Moro National Liberation Front, was arrested in Sabah last week when he fled from Jolo after an uprising he launched was put down.

The fighting broke a five-year-old peace pact that made Misuari governor of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

But few former supporters rallied behind him.

Misuari launched the fighting to dispute election results that threw him out of office. He has since been charged with rebellion by the Philippine government.

Malaysia, which has long been sympathetic to the Filipino minority in the largely Roman Catholic country, has expressed exasperation with Misuari and said he will be deported.

The Philippine army claims Misuari has links with the extremist gang Abu Sayyaf, which kidnapped a total of 24 people, including Western tourists, from the Sipadan and Pandanan islands off Sabah last year. Most of the hostages were released after the payment of millions of dollars in ransom.

On Sunday, Najib said Malaysia was not taking any chances in dealing with Filipino rebels.

The defense ministry has sent a team of naval commandos, a naval special forces team and a company of paramilitary troopers… to face any eventuality," Bernama quoted him as saying.

Malaysia's armed forces chief Mohd Zahidi Zainuddin said 10 combat vessels have been deployed to Sabah to double the naval strength in the area. *AP*

RP to fight Misuari asylum bid

By Carlito Pablo

THE GOVERNMENT will contest Nur Misuari's application for political asylum with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on the ground that he is not a political refugee.

"Misuari is facing criminal charges for rebellion. He is not a political refugee," presidential spokesperson Rigoberto Tiglao said yesterday.

Tiglao said Malacañang is verifying reports Misuari had applied for political asylum with UNCHR commissioner Rudd Lubbers through his lawyer, Ely Pamatong.

Pamatong said Misuari is deemed to be under the jurisdiction of the UNCHR under the 1951 UN Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees.

"We haven't received any communication from the UNCHR on Misuari's application as claimed by his lawyer," Tiglao said.

Misuari and six confederates were arrested on Nov. 24 by Malaysian authorities as they tried to illegally enter that country.

President Macapagal-Arroyo had said that she prefers that Misuari be held in a Malaysian jail for some time before he is repatriated to the Philippines.

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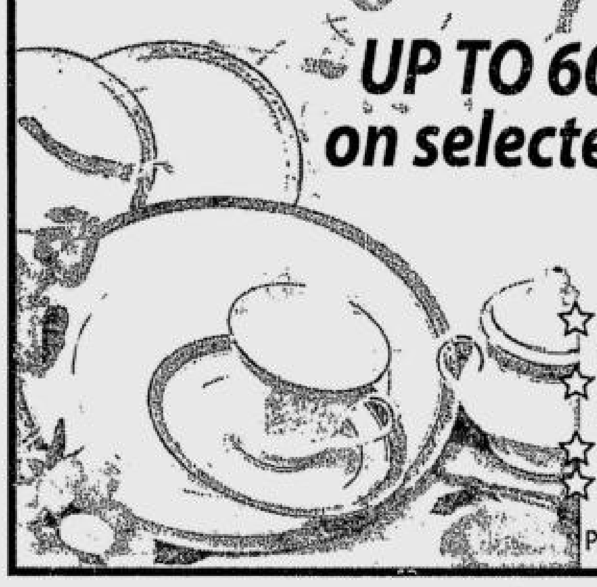

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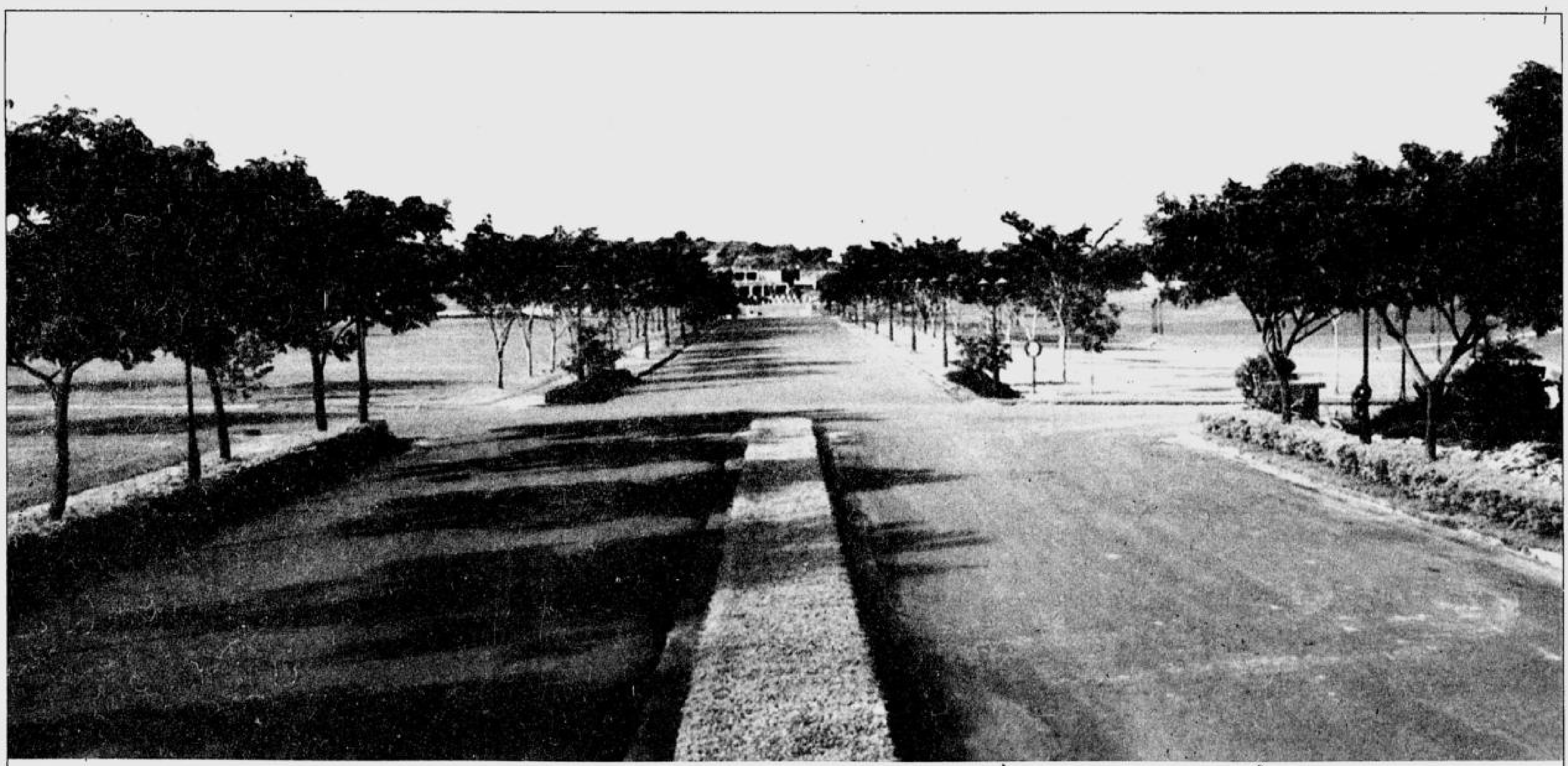

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Dentist snatched in GenSan

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—Four armed men kidnapped a woman dentist from her suburban rest house Saturday night.

Police identified the victim as Dr. Josefina Montecillo, 63, a resident of Villa Consuelo Subdivision here.

Supt. Benhur Mongao, Central Mindanao Police Command spokesperson, said Montecillo was at her rest house at Purok 1, Barangay Buayan, six kilometers from this city, to supervise some carpentry work.

Mongao said that at about 6 p.m., four armed men arrived and at gunpoint dragged the dentist to her blue Nissan pickup. The abductors sped away with their victim toward the city proper.

Senior Supt. Bartolome Baluyot, Central Mindanao police chief, quickly ordered checkpoints set up on all possible escape routes.

One hour later, police found the abandoned Nissan in Barangay San Isidro here.

Montecillo may have been abducted by a kidnap-for-ransom gang that recently came out with a list of "kidnappable" local businessmen, police theorized. They identified the leader of the gang as Miyangcang Saguile.

Montecillo's name was not on that list, however, nor has her family received a ransom demand as of Saturday.

On March 3, six armed men seized 20-year-old Janice Glenda Sinda from her family's home at the Gensanville Subdivision here.

She was released after her family reportedly paid ransom. Her relatives and the police have denied that any ransom was paid, however. ***Aquiles Z. Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

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RP, South Korea ink new air pact

THE PHILIPPINES and South Korea, hoping to perk up tourism in the wake of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks in the United States, have negotiated a new air agreement allowing each side to increase weekly flights between Manila and Seoul to 16 from 13, a government official said yesterday.

Under the new agreement, which was concluded in Seoul Thursday after two days of talks, Korean Airlines and Asiana Airlines could fly a maximum 5,200 passengers weekly using large Boeing jumbo jets, said Foreign Undersecretary Franklin Ebdalin.

Ebdalin noted that Philippine Airlines uses Airbus jets or smaller Boeing planes that carry fewer passengers.

In June, the Civil Aeronautics Board allowed Cebu Pacific Air to fly to South Korea, but the airline has not announced when this will begin. Cebu Pacific said it was negotiating to lease three B757 jets, which also are smaller than jumbos, for international flights.

Ebdalin said Philippine negotiators in the air talks were pushing for greater flight capacity rather than frequency, but the Koreans refused.

He said the Philippine Department of Transportation and Communication, the lead agency in the air talks, accepted the terms out of concern for increasing tourism.

"There will be more tourists in the sense that there will be additional flights. That's all, but we don't know what the effects would be on Philippine Airlines," he said.

He said that based on last year's statistics, there are only about 158,000 Korean tourists that visit the Philippines yearly.

The global air travel industry took a dive in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington. ***AP***

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, December 3, 2001
1st Week of Advent

1st Reading: Is 4:2-6
Gospel: Mt 8:5-11

When Jesus entered Capernaum, an army captain approached him to ask his help, "Sir, my servant lies sick at home. He is paralyzed and suffers terribly." Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him."

The captain answered, "I am not worthy to have you under my roof. Just give an order and my boy will be healed. For I myself, a junior officer, give orders to my soldiers. And if I say to one: 'Go,' he goes, and if I say to another: 'Come,' he comes, and to my servant: 'Do this,' he does it."

When Jesus heard this he was astonished and said to those who were following him, "I tell you, I have not found such faith in Israel. I say to you, many will come from east and west and sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob at the feast in the kingdom of heaven."

Commentary

Some of us are still of the belief that Jesus thought his mission was directed solely to the Jewish world. But this is not so. Reading the Gospels we find a number of texts evidently showing that salvation is for everyone. Today's text is one of them. It is not only a historical problem. To make salvation and God's love accessible to all, regardless of race, creed, etc, continues to be a challenge of today. There are manifestations of racism in our society. As Christians, can't we say and do something about it?

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SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

CIVIL LAW (AGENCY)/REMEDIAL LAW—Special power of attorney to compromise—Article 1878 of the Civil Code and Sec. 23 of Rule 138 of the Rules of Court set forth the attorney's power to compromise. Under Art 1878 of the Civil Code, a special power of attorney is necessary "to compromise, to submit questions to arbitration, to renounce the right to appeal from a judgment, to waive objections to the venue of an action or to abandon a prescription already acquired." On the other hand, Sec. 23, Rule 138 of the Rules of Court provides, "(a)ttorneys have authority to bind their clients in any case by any agreement in relation thereto made in writing, and in taking appeal, and in all matters of ordinary judicial procedure, but they cannot, without special authority, compromise their clients' litigation or receive anything in discharge of their clients' claims but the full amount in cash. The requirements under both provisions are met when there is a clear mandate expressly given by the principal to his lawyer specifically authorizing the performance of an act. It has not escaped our attention that in the present case counsel for both parties had no special power of attorney from their clients to enter into a compromise. Since the lawyers had no specific power to compromise the civil liability of all accused-appellants, its approval by the trial court which did not take the precautionary measures to ensure the protection of the right of accused-appellants not to be deprived of their property without due process of law, could not legalize it. For being violative of existing law and jurisprudence, the settlement should not be given force and effect. [Citations omitted.] [*Per Curiam, En Banc;* People v. Carpo, G.R. No. 132676, April 4, 2001]

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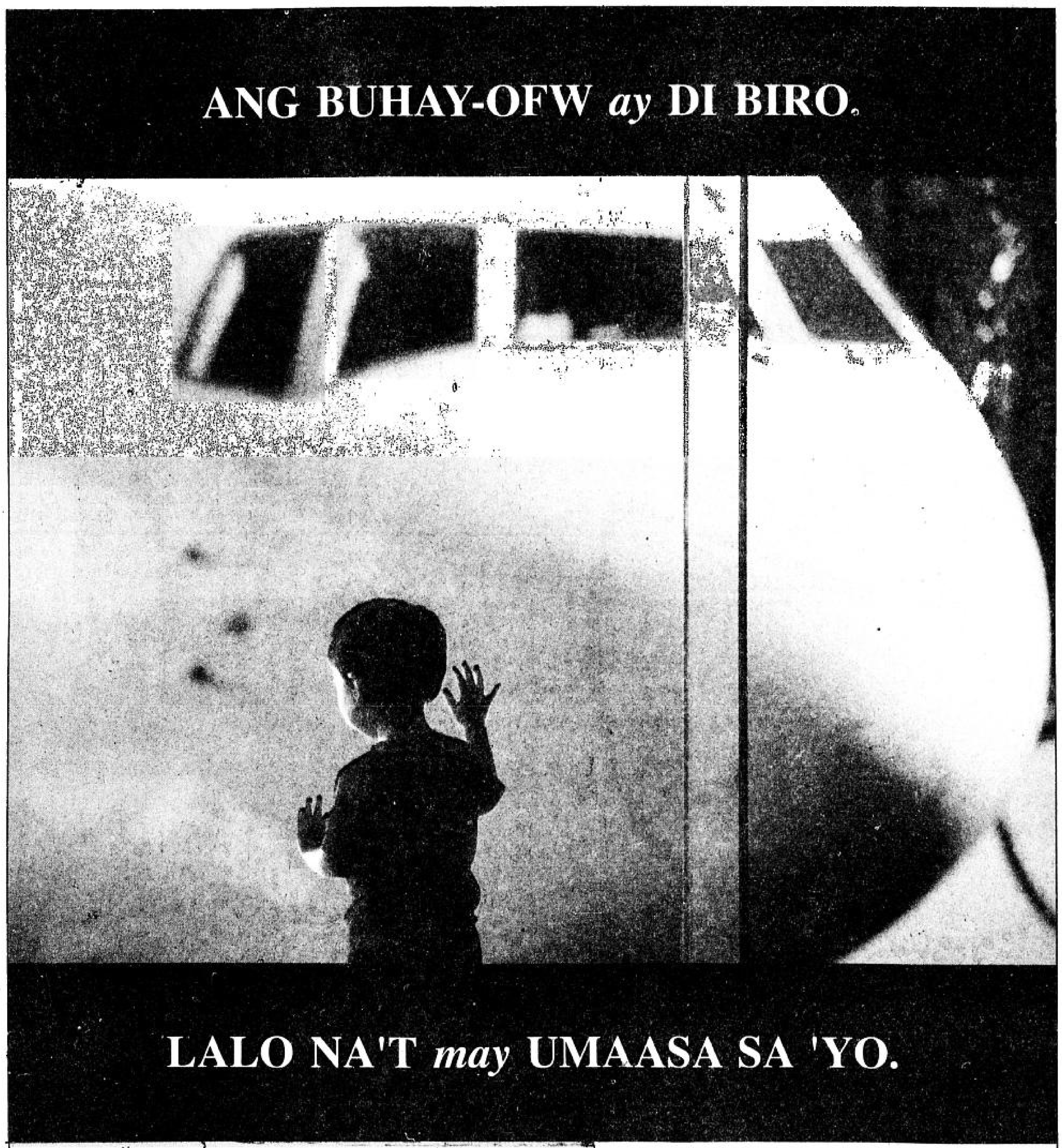
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Erap's son says Badoy biased, demands new trial

A SON of ousted President Joseph Estrada yesterday demanded a new trial for his father, accusing the judge of bias.

San Juan Mayor Joseph Victor "JV" Ejercito urged Sandiganbayan Justice Anacleto Badoy to remove himself from the case "if he has some sense of decency."

Ejercito claimed that "for him (Badoy), my father is already convicted.

"He has already promised some groups of the so-called civil society to find my father guilty of the charges against him."

Estrada has been detained at a Veterans' Memorial Medial Center in Quezon City since May, four months after a military-backed popular revolt chased him out of the presidential palace.

He is on trial for allegedly plundering a personal fortune of P4 billion, a crime punishable by death.

Ejercito told reporters he formed his opinion of the anti-graft court judge from attending the thrice-a-week trial of his father. His half-brother, former San Juan mayor, Jinggoy Estrada, is also facing plunder charges.

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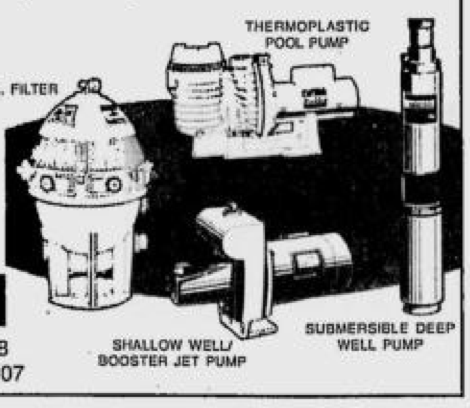

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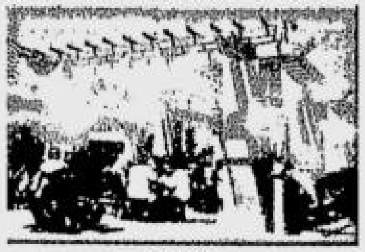
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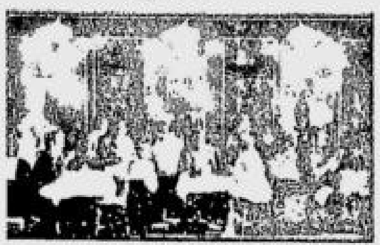
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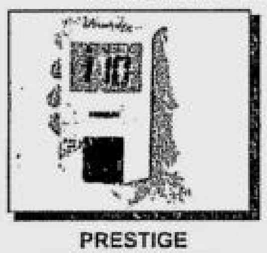

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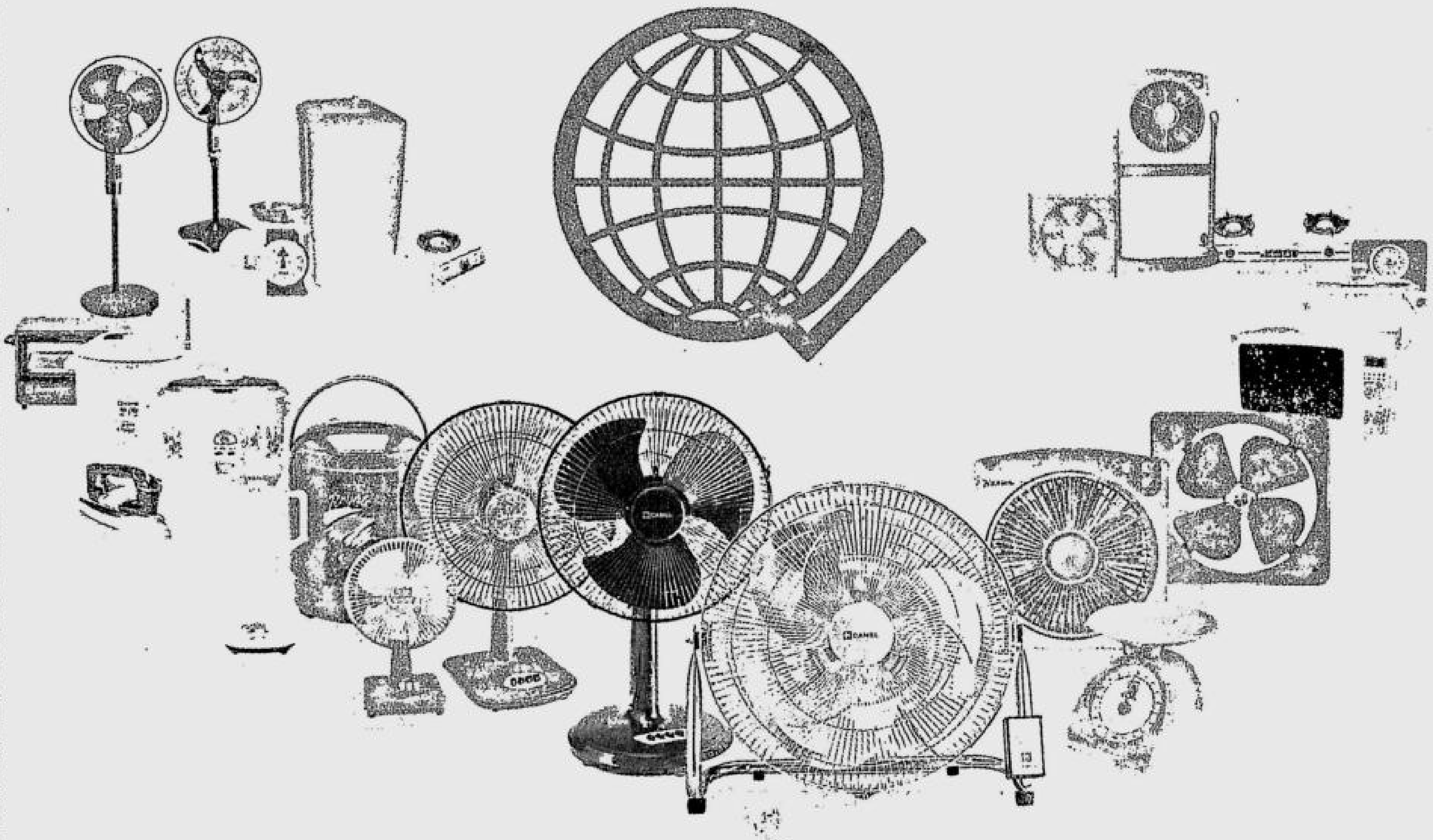

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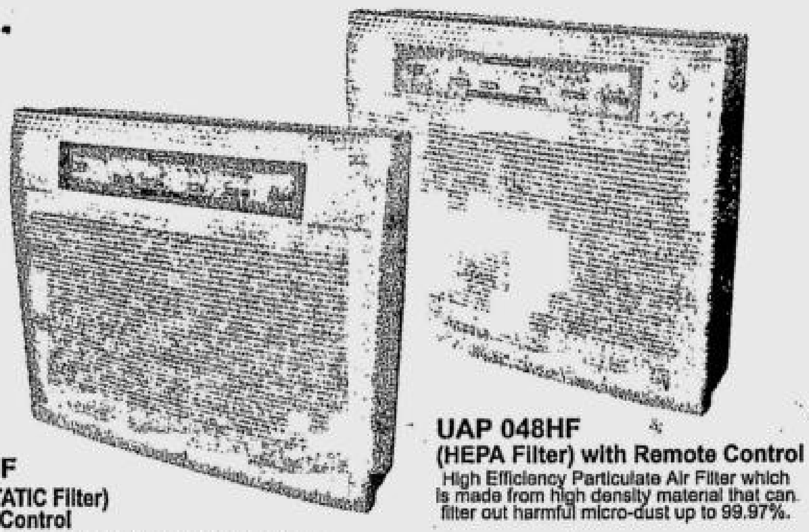

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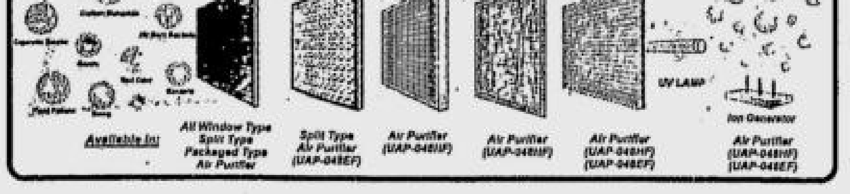
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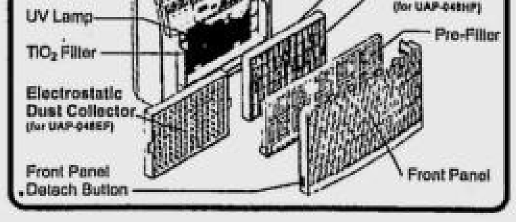
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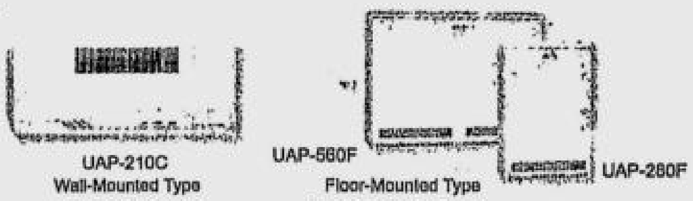

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OPINION

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Violence unveiled

EDITORIAL

THE SUICIDE of former actress Maria Teresa Carlson on Nov. 23 has focused national attention on the unspeakable horror of domestic violence. Her tragic leap from the 23rd floor of the Platinum 2000 building in San Juan tore the screen that veiled the terror from public view. Now, because of that fateful jump into the abyss, we can see for ourselves the depths of the void that domestic violence creates.

We can see also that, in spite of well-documented if obscure cases, no law yet exists that punishes those guilty of spousal abuse. Strictly speaking, wife-beating in the Philippines is not a crime.

Carlson had lived a troubled life, a life lived alternately under the klieg lights of celebrity and the ominous shadow of violence. At first she had merely given hints, slipping reporters small notes that turned out to be unexpected cries for help. Starting in 1993, she started making anonymous phone calls to a crisis hotline run by the women's group Kalakasan. Between 1993 and 1996, she worked with Kalakasan on several attempts to seek safe shelter. In October 1996, one last plan was aborted, and she then publicly reconciled with former Ilocos Norte Gov. Rodolfo Fariñas.

In the wake of her death, her family's pleas for peace of mind, for media to turn the unforgiving spotlight off, are not unexpected. The day after her death, her husband asked media not to "feast" on his wife. Since the fateful day, their eldest daughter has consistently asked media to respect their privacy, to let them mourn in silence.

Fariñas put the matter succinctly. In response to questions about his general silence on Carlson's previous public statements about their relationship, he said: "What would I say? That there was something wrong with my wife? It was (too private a) matter for anybody to get involved in."

He has a point. Privacy is a fundamental right, a function of freedom that allows the full flowering of "the dignity of every human person," in the words of the Constitution.

But the Constitution also guarantees the viability of the family. Article II, Section 12 phrases this responsibility with great precision. "The State recognizes the sanctity of family life and shall protect and strengthen the family as a basic autonomous social institution."

When two constitutional principles clash, how do we choose one over the other? No hard and fast rules exist, but the chief criterion for choosing must be the welfare of the many.

Domestic violence is a social cancer that saps the strength of the body politic. It weakens the family's capacity to serve as the basic building block of the nation. Often, silence on the part of the victim and her intimate relations is the only defense mechanism open to them. But the paradox is, in keeping silent, they only serve to extend the spiral of violence.

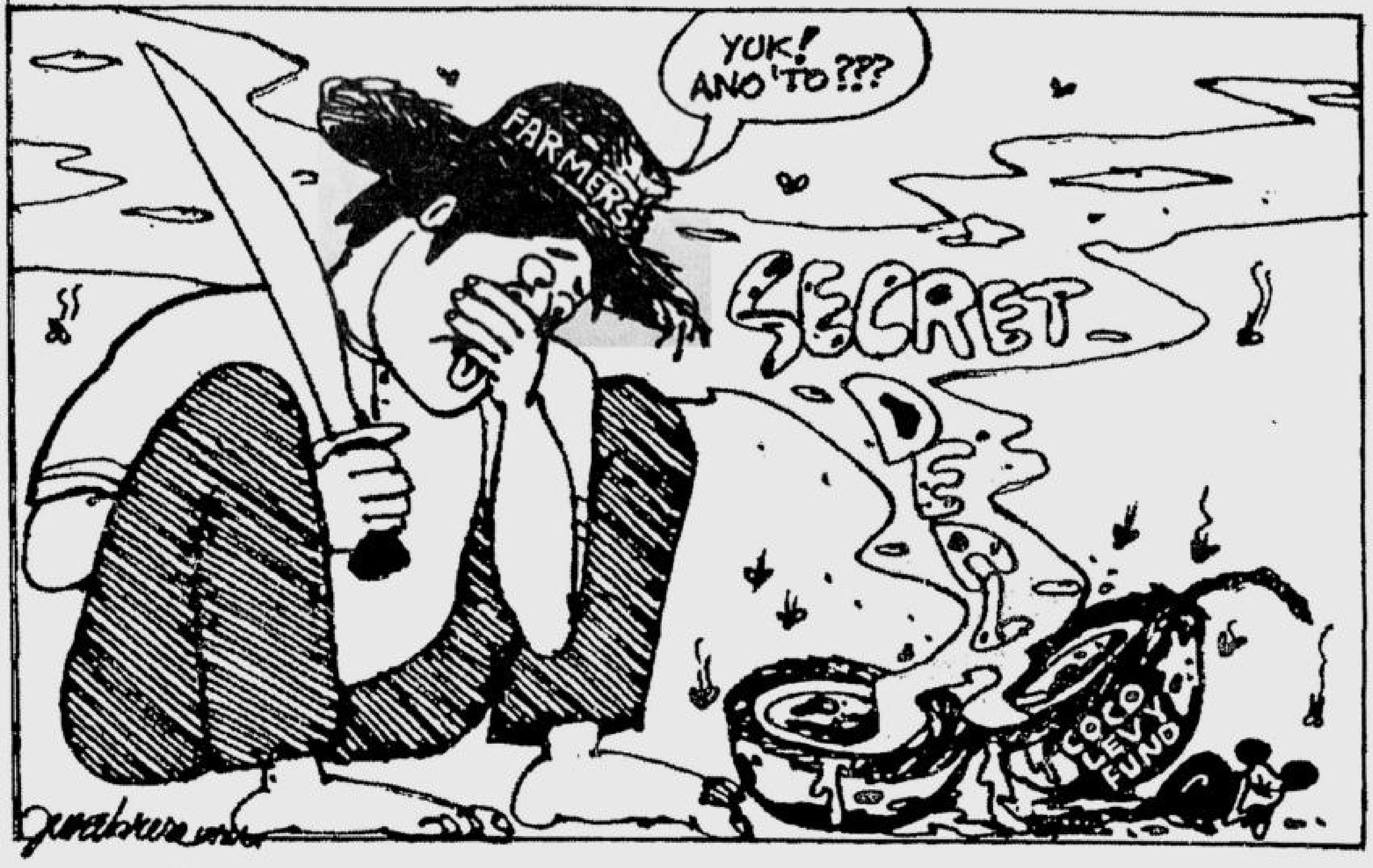
It is not only the nuclear family, however, that is complicit in the victimization of the spouse. There is a whole community that enables the victimizer to rationalize his acts, that allows the victim to resume her status in society with the minimum of inconvenience. In the language of psychology, these are the co-dependents.

The comments of Anna Leah Sarabia, a Kalakasan officer, are revealing. Speaking of Fariñas, she said: "I don't know what to say about him anymore but he certainly did not do it alone. He would not have grown into this kind of monster if the people around him did not tolerate his cruelty."

There is a bill now pending in Congress, co-authored by Bayan Muna Rep. Liza Maza and Rep. Bella Angara-Castillo and entitled the Anti-Abuse of Women in Intimate Relations bill, that seeks to stop "this kind of monster" from spawning more cruelty in the future.

With such a law in place, victims can file a case against the abusive husband in such a way that will allow them to enjoy the protection and support of government agencies and civil society organizations, the right over their personal possessions and custody of their children—while the case is pending.

These proposed provisions will allow victims to break away from the web of co-dependency that dooms their freedom. For this reason, we support the passage of the bill.



Coco levy fund is like Yamashita's treasure

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

"RELATIVES, relatives, everybody has so many relatives."

So begins an old calypso song by Edmundo Ross. The songwriter must have had the Philippines in mind when he wrote the song. For relatives are both the bane and the boon of Filipinos. They are there to help and console during times of distress and sorrow. But for some high-ranking government officials, they are there to peddle influence, feed on the carcass of taxpayers and bask in the glory of their fortunate kin.

No official has more relatives (and *compadres* and *cumadres*) real or imagined, than the president. And ironically, a number of presidents have been brought down by their relatives. President Elpidio Quirino became so unpopular because of the involvement of his brother, Tony Quirino, in the Tambobong Estate scandal. Marcos was forced to flee Malacañang partly because of the greed of his wife and relatives. Erap not only had his relatives, but also his *queridas* and his *barkada* and was also forced to flee Malacañang. Cory Aquino of course had her own notorious Kamaganak Inc. In fact, what is happening now to President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo is just a reprise of Cory and her *kamaganaks*.

Cory's relatives negotiated with the Marcoses for a compromise settlement on their ill-gotten wealth, even going to Hawaii to talk with the Marcos family. Now, Ms Macapagal's own husband and brother, along with her advisers, negotiated with Danding Cojuangco, Marcos' main business partner, for a compromise settlement on the P130-billion coconut levy fund.

The coco levy was collected by the government, through the Philippine Coconut Authority, from coconut farmers, allegedly to be plowed back to them during times of distress. Cojuangco used the money to set up the United Coconut Planters Bank, coconut oil mills and to buy controlling interest in San Miguel Corp.

When Marcos and Cojuangco went into exile in 1986, the Presidential Commission on Good Government sequestered the assets taken from the coco levy. A case was filed with the Sandiganbayan, but as with most of the ill-gotten wealth cases springing from the Marcos dictatorship, the case has hardly moved after 16 years of litigation. The Sandiganbayan under Francis Garchitorena is largely responsible for the present fight over the coco levy fund.

Had the Sandiganbayan promptly decided the case—whether the fund is public or private money—the issue would have been settled and the coco farmers would now be enjoying the benefits of the fund. The Supreme Court itself is not free of blame. When the issue was brought to it for resolution, it came out with a *binabae* decision. It said only that the coco levy is "imbued with public interest" but fell short of declaring it a "public fund."

So after 16 years, tons of paperwork, barrels of saliva and interminable arguments, the question is still unanswered until now. Yet to me, not being a justice or a lawyer, the case is quite simple. The coco levy was collected as a tax from coconut farmers with the express purpose of helping the coconut industry. Therefore, it belongs to the government which holds it in trust for the public. The coconut industry is now in distress, but where is the fund to help it?

Marcos confused the issue by declaring the coco levy fund, all by his lonesome self, as a "private fund" mainly to benefit his business partner. President Ramos reversed this by declaring it in an executive order as a "public fund" but President Estrada reversed it again by declaring it a "private fund" to keep his benefactor, Cojuangco, happy. The Pacman obviously wants to continue being happy—never mind if the coco farmers are not—by making the deal permanent through the recent compromise settlement.

The PCA (that's the People's Consultative Assembly, not the Philippine Coconut Authority) howled that the secret settlement was achieved because P20 billion would be contributed to the President's war chest for the 2004 presidential campaign. No less than First Gentleman Mike Arroyo and presidential brother Diosdado Macapagal Jr., besides several of her close advisers, were involved in the negotiations, the PCA said. The President has denied this but the First Gentleman and the First Brother are strangely silent.

While there are billions of sequestered pesos and dollars still out there waiting, whether sequestered from the Marcoses, Cojuangco and their cronies, there will always be "commissioners" who will try to negotiate a compromise for a piece of the action. Treasure hunting is a popular endeavor in the Philippines. It is easier to dream of instant riches (hence the popularity of television game shows that give generous prizes) than to work hard for it. And the coco levy and the Marcos ill-gotten wealth are like the fabled Yamashita treasure that continues to boggle the imagination and whet the appetite of scores of treasure hunters.

Greed is still the top sin of Filipinos. And ironically, the richer they are, the greedier they become. Cojuangco is a very wealthy man. His legitimate wealth alone he cannot hope to spend during the rest of his lifetime. He does not need the coco levy fund. He can give it up and still be immensely wealthy. The Filipino people, not only the coconut farmers, will adore him for it. It may even catapult him to the presidency, seeing how there is an acute dearth of presidential material. But concupiscence is a frailty that the human race is heir to. It would take a very strong character to resist it.

And instead of negotiating for compromise solutions and debating whether the coco levy fund is "public" or "private," why not do what is simple, direct and sensible: Ask the Sandiganbayan to burn the midnight oil and decide the case quickly.

* * *

Comments are welcome at asiseeit@pacific.net.ph

Loud silences

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I SAW Bureau of Immigration and Deportation Deputy Commissioner Orlando Dizon on TV last week lamenting his lot in life. All he did, he said, was issue an invitation to Pacifico Marcelo to see him. The fellow had obviously violated immigration laws. Marcelo was an American citizen, and therefore had no right to own properties in the Philippines. Least of all a telecommunications company, or companies. In the affidavit he executed, Dizon said, Marcelo indicated that he owned 85 percent of the Philippine Communications Clearinghouse Inc., a local firm. You can't have any clearer and more damning admission of guilt than that.

So why should he, Dizon, end up being the villain? He was the one who was obeying the law. He was the one who was doing his duty. He was the one who was serving his country. At the very most, he should be hailed a hero. At the very least, he should be called a good citizen.

He misses the point. All he says is true, except for one thing. Which is the timing of his invitation. If he had issued that invitation one month ago or one month later, he would have been completely vindicated. He would have been doing his duty. He would have been another Inspector Javert, hounding evildoers with the doggedness of the righteous. But he issued his invitation just when Marcelo was about to reveal what he knows—or claims to know—to the Senate.

While at that, invitations are normally sent through a card, with the words RSVP written at the bottom. They are not sent through characters that you would not like to meet in a dark alley. To this day, the women journalists who were invited in 1983 by Special Committee No. 2 of the National Intelligence Board to Fort Bonifacio to shed light on their writings do not feel grateful for the honor. This is a country that doesn't just like to do violence to people, it likes to do violence to language. Sen. Nene Pimentel had every right to warn the inviters that they were obstructing a Senate investigation and threaten them with prosecution if they should persist in their folly.

Marcelo's detractors say he can't possibly be taken seriously because of the company he keeps. His past association with Jaime Dichaves, whose tongue is so forked it is a wonder he is still able to talk—he is the fellow who claimed to be Jose Velarde—must at the very least make his accusations suspect. His present association with a group of unsavory patrons in the Senate, who were the people who tried to thwart Erap's impeachment, must at the very most make his accusation look like a demolition job.

That may be true. It is hard to see how a group that includes Ninoy Aquino's sister, the a-go-go dancer Sen. Tessie Oreta, can be up to any good. But lest we forget, the company Chavit Singson kept too prior to his decision to expose his friend and benefactor, the acting president of this country, was infinitely worse. That was what Estelito Mendoza kept harping on in the impeachment trial, to no avail. The fact that a pot calls a kettle black only means it is a hypocrite, it doesn't mean it is wrong. The same principle applies to Marcelo. The fact that he keeps unsavory company only means he probably isn't clean, it doesn't mean he is wrong.

Maybe it's true that it was Marcelo who tried to shake down the President and not the other way around. Maybe it's true that no president has been stupid enough to personally shake down anyone—when it can easily be done through a third party—and President Gloria Macagapal-Arroyo is by no stretch of the imagination stupid. All these arguments are completely valid, and credible—or should be. But what razes them like a fierce storm does ripe grain is Marcelo not being able to testify before the Senate. It is Marcelo being prevented from testifying before the Senate.

That's what leaves a bad taste in the mouth. That's what leaves a cloud of doubt about the President's innocence. That's what gives undue credence to Marcelo's story. His (enforced) silence is deafening. Let Marcelo talk in the Senate, and if he says the most foolish things, he will not escape the ire or scorn of the press and the public. Continue to prevent him from saying his piece and he will shout the fiercest words from the gag in his mouth.

The people who say Ms Macapagal cannot be foolish enough to repeat the mistakes of the past government forget that right now she—it is hard to see how the BID can act this way without her blessings or tacit approval—is being foolish enough to repeat one very fatal mistake of the past government. Which is to try to prevent someone from talking.

Didagen Dilangalen obviously thought he was doing Erap a favor by shouting his head off in Roilo Golez's committee last year in an effort to drown out Singson's voice. He did not silence him, he erected a whole platform for him from which to thunder forth his story. If Erap wants to shoot people for what happened to him, he should shoot Dilangalen first. It was his antics that made everyone curious to hear what Singson had to say. Quite apart of course from making everyone incensed enough to ask that Dilangalen be lynched.

Malacañang may not argue that you cannot just have any Tom, Dick and Harry demanding Senate time to damn a public official. Marcelo's credentials are not so easily dismissed. And only a few months ago, the Department of Justice itself was trotting out every Tom, Dick and Harry crawling to testify against Sen. Panfilo Lacson in Senate hearings that dragged on for a couple of months and produced nothing. A Senate hearing that was curious in its timing too, Victor Corpus' exposé on Lacson, which produced that hearing, coming on the heels of intense public interest in the affairs of Mike Arroyo. I will not say First Gentleman lest I be accused of doing violence to language, too.

You let Marcelo talk, and he will probably only make a fool of himself. You cut off his tongue, and he will make the angels weep with his muteness.

* * *

Comments are welcome at dequiros@vasia.com

Let's wait for SC ruling on coco levy

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

THE COCONUT levy issue remains a highly charged issue 30 years after it was first imposed on poor coconut farmers by then President Ferdinand Marcos, through his cronies, led by Eduardo Cojuangco. The emotionalism stems from the fact that the levy was a heavy taxation—it varied from P15 to P60 to as much as P100 levied on every 100 kg of copra produced from 1973 to 1982—but few real benefits accrued to the farmers. Today this levy, imposed ostensibly to alleviate the plight of the coco farmers, is estimated to be valued at P130 billion in assets set up with these funds. Cojuangco's group controlled those funds until Marcos' ouster through various projects, but the Aquino administration believed that the group personally benefited highly from the funds, so that their huge assets were sequestered right after the Edsa Revolution, and civil and criminal suits were filed against a number of them. The plight of the coco farmers remained very poor, and studies show that today many of them earn as little as P25 a day.

* * *

The problem is that through the years since Edsa I, the issue of whether the levy funds are private, as per a capricious Marcos decree obviously crafted so that he and his cohorts could use them any way they wanted, or public in nature, because they were taxes paid and therefore belong to the government, has rested in the courts; but they have failed to resolve this issue with finality. In the meantime, various presidents since Fidel Ramos have tried to look into possible compromise deals with the Cojuangco group in order to unlock some of those funds and use them ostensibly for the impoverished farmers' benefit, while awaiting the final judgment of the courts on the nature of these funds. But these efforts have always stirred tremendous controversy because sides have polarized.

* * *

Now comes President Macapagal, seeking to find the key to using the funds for the farmers, while waiting for the Supreme Court's final decision. Frankly, I don't see anything wrong in her exploring options about a "compromise" to help the farmers with those funds. But there are several things to remember: as the memo of new Philippine Coconut Authority administrator Danilo Coronacion put it, any settlement must be based on the assumption that the levy funds are public funds, i.e., not belonging to Cojuangco and cohorts. Then too, as Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo pointed out to this columnist in a recent phone call, any compromise settlement has to have the approval of the PCGG. Which is good, as the new board with chair Haydee Yorac and commissioners like Ruben Carranza and Victoria Avena, give us hope that it would not be party to any shady deals.

The mood in the PCGG is to fight the levy case out in court to the finish.

* * *

To my mind, the first thing that has to be resolved is the issue of whether these levy funds are private or public in nature. Former Senate President and first PCGG Chair Jovito Salonga pointed out in a statement that the Supreme Court is "about to decide" this issue, and he warned that any settlement could be viewed as an attempt to "preempt, wittingly or unwittingly" the high court. We can only hope *na mag-dilang anghel siya*, as a court resolution is long overdue. In case the high magistrates are tempted to dilly dally about this issue, they have only to think that thousands of coconut farmer-families earn only P25 a day. If as Salonga opined, the SC is about to resolve this issue, then the Macapagal administration should await it, so that it can move decisively toward using those funds.

Citizens ought to pressure the SC into resolving that issue now.

* * *

Zamboanga Mayor and former Cocofed administrator Clara Lobregat was quoted recently as saying that the levy funds should remain private, for once they're declared public, then they will go to the government and would be lost to the farmers for good. The implication is that nothing will come out of those funds anymore. Indeed, government could squander those funds, but then, when these were in "private" hands, i.e., the Cojuangco cronies, nothing happened to the coconut farmers; they remained poor as field rats, while those cronies, most of whom, to be fair, were already rich to begin with, became phenomenally wealthy. From the coco levy. That's for the courts to decide.

At this point, I'm willing to trust that Ms Macapagal is sincere in helping the coco farmers and that once the SC decides that the levies are public funds (but what else could they be, when they were taxes paid to the government?), she'd set up a mechanism for using them for the farmers' benefit. But first, let's await that SC decision.

* * *

In Mexico City the other week, I was invited by Philippine Chargé d'Affaires Eduardo de Vega and his wife, Consul Ma. Theresa de Vega, to a delightful dinner in honor of a visiting delegation from Vigan, Ilocos Sur, namely, three-term Mayor Eva Marie Singson-Medina, Vice Mayor Franz Ranches, Councilor Constante Benzon and Ms Celia Baterina, daughter of Ilocos Sur Rep. Salacnib Baterina. The Ilocanos were in Mexico to witness the signing of a sister-city agreement between Vigan and a town called Barra de Navidad, in Cihuatlan in the state of Jalisco along the Pacific coast. The dinner focused on the commercial and cultural relations between the port city of Acapulco and Manila during the Galleon Trade that lasted from the 17th to the 19th century.

* * *

The discussions were enriched by the presence of Mexico-based friends of the Philippines, namely, famed Mexican architect Jorge Loyzaga and his American wife Charlotte; History Prof. Ma. Cristina Barron Soto of the Universidad Ibericoamericana, who studied for her MA in History at the UP, and real estate man and art enthusiast Raul Guerrero, who's related to the Quezons here. Architect Loyzaga, who's very keen on conservation of historic sites, has a longstanding interest in Vigan as the best-preserved example of a planned Spanish colonial town in Asia, as well as in Spanish-era churches like Miag-ao in Iloilo and Baclayon in Bohol. Guerrero authored a compilation of poems in Spanish written by Filipinos such as Jose Rizal, Claro Recto and Manuel Bernabe.

As Consul de Vega and cultural attaché Josephine Abenoja explained it, the small port of Barra de Navidad was where the conquistador Miguel Lopez de Legaspi, accompanied by the 17-year-old Augustinian friar and chronicler Andres de Urdaneta, sailed en route to the Philippines in 1565, after which he founded the city of Manila. I was fascinated to learn that in a small community of Acapulco called Coyucade Benitez, there is a "barrio" where many families are of Filipino descent, distinguishable by their Filipino features and surnames, such as "Gomez de Maganda." These were believed to have descended from the Filipino "tripulantes," or sailors who served in the galleons from Manila and chose to settle in Mexico.

Getting to know Dr. Parouk

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Noralyn Mustafa

THAT is how we in Jolo have always referred to Dr. Parouk Hussin, from the day he became a full-fledged doctor.

In fact that is how we call everybody else in our hometown, from doctors to engineers to lawyers; even our officials do not escape this first-name basis familiarity.

Which is why we were amused no end when the rest of the world wondered just who was this man "who suddenly came out of the freezer" to run for Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao governor.

Doubts were cast too, on his intentions when it was said that he was a "foreigner," that he did not have the residency requirement to qualify as candidate; that he was "rammed down the throats of the electorate" by the administration, and therefore he would just be an "alter-ego" of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

Worse, there were even some who thought that Dr. Parouk, being a top-ranking Moro National Liberation Front officer, was just another "warlord," and even a potential "despot." As if there was no difference between one and the other.

Being a virtual unknown and the "anointed" of the administration were the main criticisms thrown at Dr. Parouk the moment he was named candidate to the highest office in the Muslim autonomous region. And of course, among those loyal to MNLF founding chair Nurullaji Misuari, he was branded as one of the "traitors" who, with not a little help from Malacañang, maneuvered Misuari's ouster.

But other than these and the fact that he was supposed to be carrying a foreign passport, his critics were hard put trying to dig up some dirt with which to discredit him. There were none, because believe it or not, there are none.

You have seen Dr. Parouk on TV guesting on several talk shows, news programs and forums. What you saw is what you'll get.

Of course there is so much more beyond the frame of the television screen that defines him as a person, which is certainly the more interesting part. Not the least of which is the well-kept secret that he loves to sing the songs of Frank Sinatra but can't carry a single tune.

But that Dr. Parouk would become a member of the MNLF, and an officer in its central committee was the last thing we expected of the young man with an elitist background from a privileged clan.

As a young doctor and a bachelor, he carried no chip on his shoulder, his future was secure, and in the activist '60s when the rest of his generation, even here in Jolo, were shouting themselves hoarse at demos and trying to change the world, he was just minding his own business, trying to build a private practice after serving as the town's municipal health officer.

But maybe there were already signs there that even we failed to see.

Maybe it was when he returned after finishing a graduate program in the University of the Philippines Institute of Public Health. Maybe it was in his choice of role models, first on the list of which was then "doctor to the barrios," now Sen. Juan Flavier.

Dr. Parouk never runs out of anecdotes starring Dr. Flavier. It even seems that he has memorized his idol's homespun perspective of the social situation, where the truly marginalized could be seen in all their pathos and also their follies.

As a government doctor serving the poorest of the poor, he saw these demonstrated over and over in real life situations. But at the time, the most that he could do was to dispense free treatment and medicines; and in his frustration he could only assail the government for the severely inadequate services that the public health system provided.

Still, he was not the type who could just change into a fist-raising, slogan-spewing activist. Raised in a conservative, religious family that zealously guarded its dignity, where integrity was just one of the values that his parents showed by example, Dr. Parouk was not about to upset the way things were.

But then again, maybe it was the very traits instilled in him that caused the transformation. Nonetheless, if anything, he can perhaps be best described as an accidental rebel.

And the "accident," ironically, was when the town of Jolo was attacked by forces of the MNLF in 1974 that not only reduced his clinic into ashes and his car into scrap, but also landed him on the military's list of rebel suspects.

The rest is MNLF history.

So, is he a "foreigner"? In all the years that he has had to live abroad, he couldn't even get rid of his accent, how much more his being a full-blooded Tausug, of Talipao on his mother's side and of Maimbung, where his paternal grandfather, Panglima Hassan, was known as "Hassan the Rich."

But what is of much concern to us now in the autonomous region is that Dr. Parouk will be governor of the ARMM at what could be the worst time for anyone to assume that office.

Misuari has been arrested and detained in Malaysia; his loyalists attacked Jolo, leaving some 120 people killed and a score injured; they have engaged the military in a violent encounter in Zamboanga City, and, after having taken hostages whom they used to ensure their safe passage, have now fortified themselves still within city limits.

Not only that, they are reportedly demanding, among others, that all charges against Misuari be dropped and that the government help set up their camp in Zamboanga del Sur.

And amid pocket skirmishes between government forces and Misuari loyalists, the latest news reports say that the Moro Islamic Liberation Front has now decided to ally themselves with the forces of the embattled outgoing ARMM governor.

But overwhelming though these problems may be, Dr. Parouk's election as governor of the very much-troubled autonomous region, signals the redemption of the Bangsamoro from a much-maligned people to what they truly are and should be: a proud race that, unhampered by counterfeit leaders, and given fair and equal chances, can achieve as much and be as productive as the best of them, *insh'allah*.

Virgin birth, without archangels

COMMENTARY

Dean Jorge Bocobo

AT THE MOMENT of their maculate conception, already said to be splotched with original sin, human beings consist of a single cell much smaller than the dot on this "I," called a "zygote." This very special cell results from the successful fusion of a human sperm cell and a female egg during sexual coupling.

With any luck, that tiny bit of commingled genome, will grow in the mother's womb, protein construction self-directed by its DNA, from a single cell, to 2, 4, 8, 16...cells, multiplying in number and specialization with every cell division, passing through various stages of growth with fearsome names, from zygote, blastocyst, embryo, fetus, baby. The incredible mass of nearly 30 billion cells in a typical human adult will not usually be attained until after birth, and years of occupying, and perhaps abusing, a privileged position in the food chain.

These are the elementary facts of human biology which eluded humanity for millennia, until microscopes and chemistry were invented and the physical, genetic basis for birth and heredity, as mediated by sex, became elucidated. There are no known exceptions in history, except possibly for the Person produced by that Immaculate Conception, mediated by an archangel, which Catholicism celebrates later this week, and the resultant virgin birth commemorated at Christmas.

Still most people cannot conceive of any other way that a simple human being would come to be, than as the mingling of something from a man with something from a woman. But, as the prudish or squeamish among us may now be delighted to discover, raw sex, as in copulation, is not essential or even necessary to human reproduction.

In special medical clinics for infertile couples, a procedure called *in vitro fertilization* (IVF), creates viable human embryos by mixing husband's sperm and wife's eggs "in test tubes." The viable zygotes are put back in the woman, if she is capable of completing a pregnancy, or in surrogate mothers, where they develop into perfectly normal babies in the usual way.

The first test tube baby, Louise Joy Brown from Bristol England, was born in July 1978. She was the first of more than 200,000 human beings that have been born since then, all of whom were conceived outside of their mother's wombs. All are normal, and "Little Louise" as the press called her at birth, just celebrated her 23rd birthday this year.

IVF breaks no real taboos and has won wide acceptance for bringing happiness to couples incapable of having children otherwise in a way that seems to stay within the envelope of what people conceive of as natural. With IVF, technology is just assisting nature, so to speak. And while IVF proves sex is not *necessary* in principle, still sex is *sufficient* for reproduction of human beings, and the overwhelming popular choice.

But our new world is far, far braver than this. In a possible historic first, Advanced Cell Technologies Inc., of Worcester, Massachusetts, revealed last week that it had succeeded in electrochemically activating an unfertilized human egg, causing it to begin dividing and growing, a demonstration of the feasibility of parthenogenesis, or "virgin birth," the sexless reproduction of a human being from the DNA of an adult female only.

To accomplish their ambitious medical goals the company is also using the same technique used to make Dolly the Sheep, the so-called nuclear transfer technique, in order to produce human stem cells. These are undifferentiated cells that can be used to grow specialized tissues and even organs for therapy of such diseases as stroke, diabetes, cancer and many others. Using this cloning technique, even single males can reproduce by "virgin birth"!

The company eventually wants to supply spare parts for human bodies, such as replacement blood, kidneys, livers, pancreases, spinal cords, hearts and every other component of our bodies, that sooner or later falls prey to disease, accident, or disrepair. The unique thing about their intended product is, each such replacement organ would be grown from cells supplied by you, the customer, for a perfect, rejection-proof transplant whenever in life you need it.

Millions of people worldwide, who are facing imminent death from organ failure of one type or another, would benefit immediately from the successful development of such a therapeutic cloning technique that would supply the transplantable organ needed to save their lives and not have to get it from somebody else.

A big leap in human life expectancies is touted by supporters, since so-called therapeutic cloning techniques could conceivably revolutionize medicine and make human lifespan limited only by the fatal accident or suicide rate. But the ethical and sociological implications are mind-boggling and the coincidence of the announcements with the Feast of the Immaculate Conception this week is positively eerie.

The development and perfection of these techniques may eventually be seen as the first step into a biological river Rubicon that when finally crossed will break an ancient paradigm. That paradigm is dual parenthood, the customary condition of having a mother and a father from each of whom one inherits equal halves of humanity's genetic pool of traits.

Human cloning technology and genetic engineering make possible the seemingly bizarre situation in which a single person can opt to reproduce, to have children, by causing the virgin birth (asexual reproduction) of a much younger identical twin, in a procedure similar to in vitro fertilization. Single parenthood could thus become a real reproductive option and our concepts of family and society be forever transformed.

Selective reporting of Vandolph accident

READERS' ADVOCATE

Raul J. Palabrica

IN THIS celebrity-crazy society of ours, stories involving movie personalities never fail to catch the public's attention. Print, radio and television media are aware of this peculiarity and take advantage of it to gain an edge in the ratings game.

The gruesome murder of veteran actress Nida Blanca hogged the limelight for almost two weeks. Everything and anything that had something to do with the crime (some of which were completely irrelevant) were grist for media coverage and commentary.

Then, like a side story in a movie, an incident involving another movie personality suddenly came into the picture. The son of comedy king Dolphy with actress Alma Moreno, Vandolph Quizon, figured in a serious vehicular accident in Pangasinan on Nov. 19.

On the way to Baguio City, Vandolph, who drove a Ford F-150 pickup, tried to overtake another vehicle when it smashed into an Isuzu Elf truck carrying gravel and sand that was traveling in the opposite direction on the other lane.

The efforts of top-notch physicians to save him, the accounts of the people who helped bring him and his lady companion to the hospital and how moviedom felt bad about another tragic accident in its midst were published or broadcast by practically all the major media outlets in the country.

The stories that came out of the INQUIRER's Metro and Entertainment sections revolved around Vandolph, his girlfriend Desiree Raquiza (a granddaughter of former Assemblyman Antonio Raquiza), his driver Allan Areza and aide Ruel Biong.

But there was no mention at all of the names of the driver and occupants of the Elf truck that Vandolph's pickup collided into. Or whether they were similarly seriously injured or emerged unscathed from the accident.

Reporting lapses

This treatment did not sit well with a reader from Baguio City who asked not to be named. Upset by the focus or slant of the stories on the incident, he said that "unless I have missed it, there has been absolutely no information in any story regarding the accident that tells the reader the status and medical condition of the driver and passengers, if any, of the Elf truck that Vandolph's vehicle hit.

"I understand the public outpouring for an entertainment figure, but again, unless I missed it, not a word has been mentioned about the people who may have been in the Elf truck, not a mention of a prayer or anything. And I am sure those folks are just as important to their parents as Vandolph is to his.

"This is especially astounding, considering that it appears that Vandolph's driving caused the accident and the Elf truck driver and vehicle simply happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. Adding to the intrigue of the story is the information in the Nov. 22 issue of the INQUIRER that Vandolph had no driver's license of any kind and absolutely should not have been driving the Ford F-150."

I got mixed replies from the editorial staff when I brought to their attention the reader's complaint about the failure of the INQUIRER to give fair, if not equal, treatment to the other accident victims. The occupants of the Elf truck may not enjoy the same social standing as Vandolph, but that does not make them less of human beings who deserve respect and consideration from other sectors of our society.

A staff member said she submitted the names of the Elf truck occupants but, for unexplained reasons, the information was not used. In that report, the names of the other victims were mentioned—Ronnie Ulpindo (the driver) and his companions Jefferson Ulpindo, Grace Cabado and Manny Eulalia—including the hospital where they were brought, the Sacred Heart Memorial Hospital.

Another staff member said all the elements of the news, from the site of the accident to the ferrying of Vandolph and his girlfriend to Manila to the condition of the other less popular victims, should have been merged in one story.

In passing, an editor noted that at the time of the accident, there were other news stories that competed for the attention of the staff. These were the attacks by Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao Gov. Nur Misuari's forces on Army camps in Sulu, the suicide of former beauty queen Maria Teresa Carlson, the Supreme Court's decision upholding the validity of the Plunder Law and the affirmation of the conviction of Rep. Romeo Jalosjos for the rape of an 11-year-old girl.

Evaluation

From the explanations given, I think the INQUIRER erred in concentrating on Vandolph and his companions in reporting the accident. The occupants of the Elf truck deserved equal, if not more prominent, mention in the news because they were at the receiving end of the reckless driving by somebody who had no business driving the "assailant" vehicle.

The noticeable absence of reference to the other victims may have unwittingly given the impression to the readers that only the welfare of Vandolph and company mattered and those of the rest did not deserve the attention of the editorial staff.

It is no excuse that the editorial desk was swamped with other significant newsworthy events when the accident happened. Heavy load and deadlines are part of the journalistic trade. No matter what the work environment, the news has to be reported thoroughly, completely and promptly.

Accordingly, the INQUIRER apologizes for the reporting lapse in the Vandolph accident. It has taken the appropriate measures to avoid a repeat of the said incident.

Geography mix-up

Gabriel Paynagan of Matbin, Compostela Valley wants to correct a news report in the Nov. 18 issue of the INQUIRER that "15 suspected New People's Army rebels were killed while three soldiers were wounded in an encounter in Cateel, Compostela Valley on Friday."

He wrote: "For your information, the encounter did not happen in Compostela Valley. It happened in Cateel, Davao Oriental. There is no Cateel in ComVal Province and it takes more than two hours to travel to Davao Oriental from ComVal.

"You know that you're destroying the image of a newly born Compostela Valley Province on which we have spent much to promote to investors and local tourism.

"The '101st infantry battalion' you mentioned as assigned in ComVal is not a battalion; it is a brigade. Geographical ignorance!"

The INQUIRER stands corrected on the items mentioned by the reader. It was an honest mistake. It regrets whatever troubles the error may have brought on the residents and business people of Compostela Valley.

* * *

The readers' advocate may be reached at the following address: "The Readers' Advocate" c/o Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, Makati City. Or through fax nos. 897-4793 to 94, or readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph.

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Perspective for Naia 3 controversy

THIS is in response to comments of Neal H. Cruz and Conrado Banal on the Piatco contract for the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 3.

Briefly, these are the relevant facts of the case:

1. In 1996 during the time of President Fidel Ramos, the Lucio Tan-led Asia's Emerging Dragon Corp. (AEDC) proposed to build the project under the BOT scheme, offering P135 million to the government for 27 years. The proposal was challenged by Paircargo (predecessor of Piatco), which offered the government P17.7 billion over the same period and under the same terms.

2. The following year the government and Piatco entered into a concession agreement. The agreement was amended during the time of President Joseph Estrada.

3. The AEDC sought a temporary restraining order before the Pasig Regional Trial Court against the contract and filed a graft case in the Ombudsman against then Public Works Secretary Vicente Rivera, who signed the amended contract. Both cases were dismissed and the contract was declared aboveboard by the Ombudsman.

4. The House committee on transportation and communications inquired into the case and found that the award of the Naia 3 project to Piatco was proper and valid, and the concession agreement between the government and Piatco was legal and binding.

5. Later, another opposer came, the Manila-Naia Association of Service Operators (Maso), an umbrella group of cargo handlers, maintenance agencies, caterers and other service operators at the Naia 2. Maso deals directly with the Philippine Airlines, which has exclusive use of the Naia 2.

6. Maso's spokesperson (and occasional president) is former Securities and Exchange Commission chair Perfecto Yasay Jr. It was he as SEC chair who approved the rehabilitation plan of Tan's PAL. Incidentally, Tan's PAL owes the government P1.8 billion for the exclusive use of the Naia 2 and uses the Yasay-approved rehabilitation plan as an excuse not to pay its debt. Indeed the ties that bind Tan and Yasay go a long way.

7. Afraid of losing its lucrative business with PAL at the Naia 2, Maso joined hands with Tan to block the Naia 3 project by filing numerous cases against Transportation Secretary Pantaleon Alvarez and Piatco.

8. The Piatco contract will not deter the development of the former Clark airport. The Naia 3 contract states that the passenger traffic in Clark and three other airports could be hiked only after the Naia 3 has achieved a 10 million level. As things stand now, the passenger traffic at the Naia is eight million a year, or only two million short of the target over a 27-year period, which could be realized in a short time. In contrast, Clark has only a passenger volume of 35,000 a year out of the allowable limit of 850,000. Clearly, the Naia 3 project does not pose any hurdle to the development of other airports.

9. Alvarez is bound by law to implement the contract. To do so otherwise would open him up to graft charges.

10. Maso and Tan have opened a new battlefront—the Commission on Appointments where they hope to block the confirmation of Alvarez.

We fervently hope that the above has clarified the relevant issues regarding the Naia Terminal 3 project.

Let us not allow narrow self-interest to dictate the course of governance.—**RAMON CUYCO, spokesperson, Department of Transportation and Communications, The Columbia Tower, Ortigas Avenue, Mandaluyong City**

Unquestioned fidelity to people's cause

IN YOUR news article titled, "Haydee enters coco fund fray" on Nov. 28, I was quoted as saying that farmers' groups were being offered billions to drop their objections to a negotiated deal. What was omitted however was the next part of my statement which was the more significant portion—that is why I mentioned it—that the offer was not accepted. In other words, that the groups against a compromise settlement involving the coco levy funds cannot be bought. I also mentioned that the best persons to ask about this would be Joey Faustino, executive director of the Coconut Reform Industry Movement and probably, Omi Royandoyan of the Philippine Peasant Institute because they have been working with the coconut farmers for many, many years already.

Kindly make this necessary correction because Faustino and Royandoyan are men of integrity and have been with the people's movement for decades and have never betrayed the people's cause. I have admired their fidelity to the cause of the poor all these years and I would be the last person to cast any doubt on their dedication, honesty and commitment.—**MA. LINDA OLAGUER MONTAYRE, secretary general, People's Consultative Assembly, Rm. 202B, Evekal Bldg., 855 Arnaiz Avenue, Makati City**

Worst crisis facing us

THE PHILIPPINES, ever in crisis, is in its worst crisis ever. It's a fact that countries that used to trail us have recently left us behind in economic and social development. The series of administrations we have had in the recent past have laid open our country to foreign interests even before the International Monetary Fund-World Bank launched its structural adjustment program (SAP). When the SAP's policies of liberalization, privatization and deregulation became official conditions for loans after 1979, the administrations from then on just began completing the removal of remaining barriers to the free flow of capital and goods into and out of our country.

The denationalization (or liberalization) of our economy was practically and officially done when the Senate, with then Sen. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo as the lead proponent, ratified the GATT and thus enlisted the Philippines into the World Trade Organization in December 1994. Now President Macapagal has enlisted the country's total support for the US-led war. She has even actively taken lead in convincing her Asean counterparts to do the same.

The US-led globalization has dragged the world into a series of crises and wars. The Macapagal administration's complete adherence to globalization, which has brought us into severe crisis, is leading us to our worst crisis.

Only the people united globally and nationally against globalization can concertedly act to solve the crisis and stop the war. Consistent with our stand against globalization, we register our strongest protest against the war. —**WITH 16 SIGNATORIES FROM DIFFERENT RELIGIOUS GROUPS AND LAY ORGANIZATIONS**

Rudeness and cruelty in delivery room

I HAD the opportunity to be exposed to one of our public hospitals (inside the delivery room) here in Manila as part of my one week postgraduate training. It was one of the most stupefying experiences in my life. Let me tell you why.

Without anesthesia, one afternoon I sutured two first degree perineal lacerations. I made five figure of eights in the muscular layer plus five more inverted T's in the skin layer for one patient and a combination of other types of stitches in another patient who had multiple lacerations. Every suture has two needles. My face was 12 inches away from my patient's gaping and bleeding wounds, between her bloodied thighs. I could hardly see what my needle was biting into. I was at the other side of the delivery room—away from the sunlight and circulating air. Yes, the windows were open so that air could come in.

Beside me was my colleague. She was repairing another case of multiple lacerations also without anesthesia. I guess her case was more complicated than mine. She had been suturing the wounds for almost an hour, with her patient accidentally kicking me or my patient with every needle bite. She was using the droplight though—the only light for our row of three delivery tables. We were supporting ourselves on bended, trembling knees. There were only a few chairs in that delivery room.

The hospital had no anesthesia in its delivery room at that moment. The staff was asking us to wait for an emergency purchase. The residents on duty said that we go on with the repair. My mind was in tumult.

This practice is not a new medical breakthrough. I am afraid this is a common occurrence in all government hospitals experiencing the bite of austerity measures due to lack of funds. It is not the fault of the employees way down the hospital hierarchy either. They should not feel guilty. The government should. Those who cut the budget for public hospitals should feel every bite of the needle in their flesh without anesthesia. Those who stole government funds should be in this delivery table—lacerated, in pain and bleeding, threatened and humiliated.

With us in the room were 10 more women in different stages of labor on their delivery tables—their quivering bodies partly covered by a hospital gown made of cheap, thin muslin cloth, their legs widely stretched. Blood, urine, feces, amniotic fluid and meconium ooze from all the orifices found between these women's legs. These same fluids were splattered almost everywhere. Pain was in the air.

Five meters from us were four sinks with faucets without running water. Beside a sink were two black plastic drums, half-filled with water. We use them for cleaning our instruments and for cleaning our patients. A single toothbrush with worn-out bristles is used for brushing off the clots that get stuck between the "teeth" of the clamps and forceps.

For every sound or movement each patient makes, varying derogatory remarks were made by the resident physicians or medical students alike. Dr. S, a male first year resident said "*Aray kayo ng aray! Pero nang ginagawa ninyo iyan, ohhh kayo ng ohhh*!" He was not funny. When the patient said, "*Teka lang dok*!", he replied "*Teka lang din! Marami pa akong pasyente!*" and he struck his patient's abdomen with his left hand, thrusting his pointed fingertips downward at the patient's lower abdomen, making the patient wince in pain. I was dumbfounded. The patient tried to control her tears.

Dr. M, a female doctor with a husky voice approached one patient who had just delivered her placenta. Without warning, she thrust half of her arm into the patient's uterus. Naturally, the patient cringed and howled. Angrily, Dr. M shouted at the top of her voice, "*Ano ba? Bubuntis-buntis ka tapos reklamo ka ng reklamo ngayon*!" She wanted the patient to stay put while she forced her hands into her uterus to scrape off placental fragments and blood clots!

Dr. E on the other hand, loved to threaten her patients, "*Pag umiyak ka pa, iiwanan kita. Manganganak kang mag-isa*!" or "*Kapag hindi ka nag*-family planning *at nabuntis ka ulit sa susunod na taon, hindi ka na namin tatanggapin dito*!" She loved to wrestle with the patient's legs while she pulled them across their delivery tables.

Why do we see such ruthless behavior in the delivery room of public hospitals? Is it because these doctors are tired? Or is it because they know that these patients are poor and that they could bear anything just to have a cheap delivery? It must be the latter. These doctors are nice to me because I am a health professional. They are nice to each other because they are colleagues. They are nice to the other staff. They trade jokes, say please and thank you for every favor done to help them.

I heard one of the medical students shout at an uncooperative teenage mother, "*Umayos ka ng higa! Pababayaan kitang duguin diyan! Kaya ka nabuntis kasi ang aga mong lumandi*! *Ang landi-landi mo*!" The patient refused to have her episiotomy repaired. Was the threat necessary? Was the insult therapeutic?

I know how painful childbirth is. I have given birth twice. It is physically and emotionally draining. Luckily, the obstetrician was a friend, and so was the attending nurse. I was a paying patient with the luxury of a single room with telephone, refrigerator, television and my own bathroom. I was also a graduate of that institution. No one could just shout at me.

But these women have nothing to pay for their delivery. Some even had to borrow money for their diapers, sanitary pads and transportation. They are the wives of construction workers, vendors, pedicab drivers, welders, all types of blue collar workers and the unemployed. Some were rape victims. Others were nearing the menopause stage. Some anticipated their babies. Others had unwanted pregnancies. But, they all decided to go on with the pregnancy—a brave move for economically deprived women.

Why are poor, pregnant women treated like this? Why is the delivery of economically deprived but pregnant women seen as a liability? Why are the poor oppressed at all stages in their lives including childbirth?

And to us caregivers who have been blessed with so many things in life—do we have to be this rude and merciless to our patients? We have economic and political power over our indigent patients. We are educated. The institution is behind us. We know this. The patients know this. They look up to us. Do we need to look down on them?

Our patients are everything but people with economic and political power. Most have not even graduated from high school. Most have nothing and no one to back them up. They are people in pain. They are women with babies. They should be treated as humans.—**NAME WITHHELD ON REQUEST**

IF you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the treatment of news and photos by the Inquirer, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue, corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, City of Makati or send a fax to Nos. 897-4793, 897-4794, or e-mail readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph

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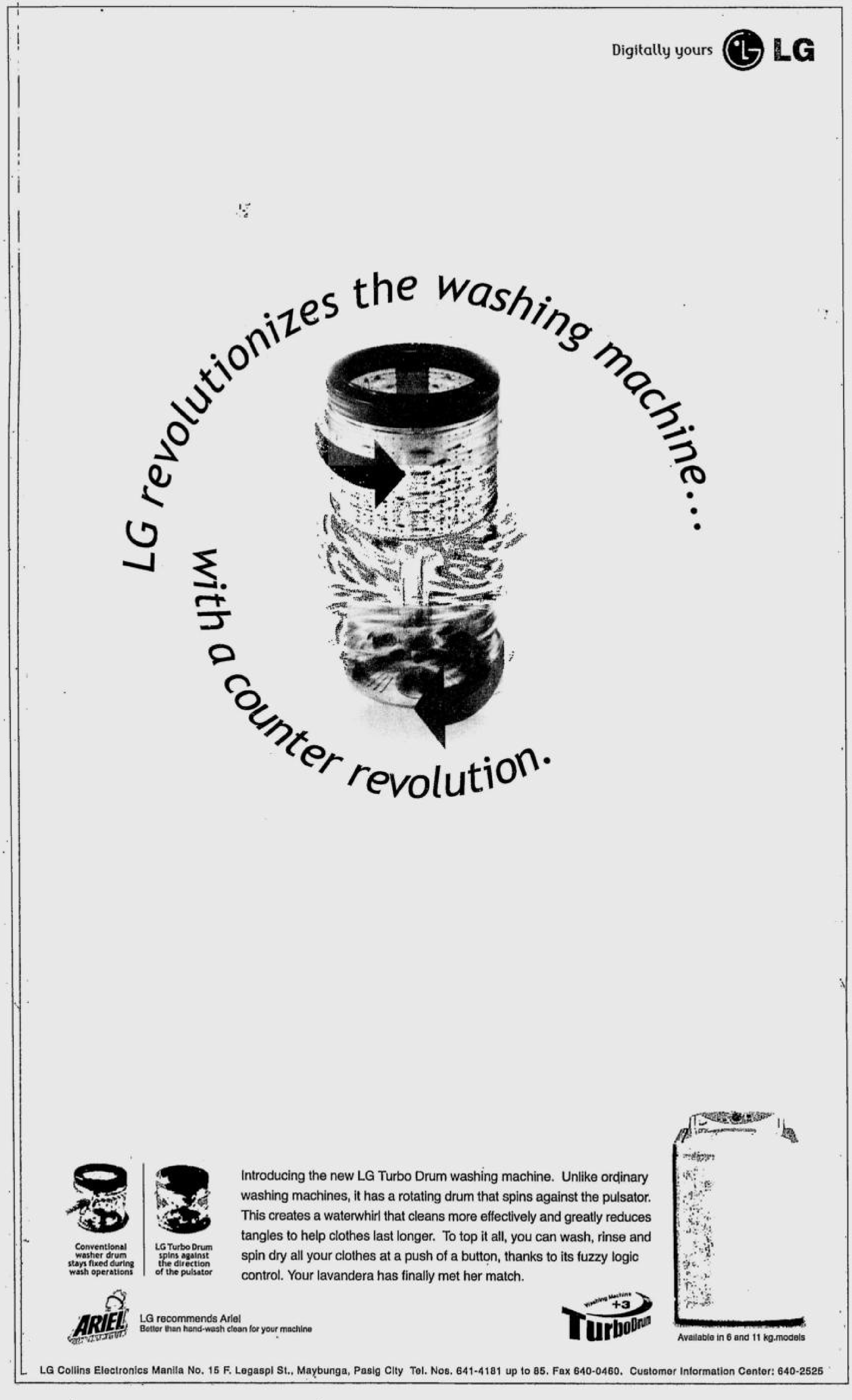
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The WORLD

LUVERNE B. GUECO, EDITOR

Triple blasts in Jerusalem kill 12

KHALIFA SHOES

AN ISRAELI firefighter calls for additional help as he combats a burning car bomb, which detonated in a series of blasts in central Jerusalem Dec. 1.

REUTERS

JERUSALEM—A double Palestinian suicide bombing and a car bomb minutes later killed 10 Israelis and wounded more than 150 on Saturday on a crowded street in the heart of a Jerusalem cafe district, Israeli police said.

The blasts, which hurled victims and severed limbs into the air, were described by an Israeli spokesman as the biggest attack in Jerusalem in years and dealt a fresh blow to a new US mission to end 14 months of Israeli-Palestinian violence.

US President George W. Bush demanded that Palestinian President Yasser Arafat bring those responsible for the attacks to justice and "act swiftly and decisively against the organizations that support them."

"Now more than ever, Chairman Arafat and the Palestinian Authority must demonstrate through their actions and not merely their words their commitment to fight terror," Bush said in a statement.

Planned talks in the White House between Bush and Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon were brought forward to Sunday from Monday to enable the premier to fly home early from the United States to tackle the crisis, US and Israeli officials said.

Israel said it held Arafat directly responsible for the attacks. The Palestinian Authority condemned the bombings, which it said were intended to foil peace efforts, and vowed to investigate who was behind the attacks.

An anonymous telephone caller said the militant Islamic Jihad movement was responsible but the claim could not be confirmed independently.

Police said at least 10 people were killed in addition to the two Palestinian suicide bombers who detonated their explosives within moments of each other on a crowded pedestrian mall.

Witnesses said the first blast shook the crowded Ben Yehuda pedestrian street, full of restaurants and cafes and the site of several previous attacks, just before midnight.

Police said the bombs were packed with nails.

"People flew into the air and there are many people covered in blood," said a woman who gave her name only as Liron.

Minutes later, a bomb exploded in a car about 50 meters away as about 20 people tried to move it because it was blocking a road needed by ambulances to rush the injured to hospital, the witnesses said.

Another witness, Yossi Mizrahi, said: "I saw people without arms. I saw a person with their stomach hanging open. I saw a 10-year-old-boy breathe his last breath. I can't believe anybody would do anything like this." *Reuters*

7 killed in bus blast in Haifa

JERUSALEM—A bomb exploded on a public bus in the northern Israeli city of Haifa on Sunday, killing at least seven people, police said.

Police and witnesses at first said blasts had ripped through two buses but later said that a powerful explosion on one bus had severely damaged another parked nearby.

The explosion took place little more than 12 hours after Palestinian militants carried out a double suicide bombing and car bombing in Jerusalem that killed 10 Israelis and wounded 150.

The bombing on Sunday tore through a bus in central Haifa.

"A bus travelling toward the downtown area suffered a huge blast, and I can tell you there were seven dead on that bus," Haifa police officer Yehuda Maman said. *Reuters*

Major bomb attacks since 1993 peace pact

JERUSALEM—A list of some of the largest bomb attacks since the Israel-Palestinian peace accord was signed in 1993:

April 6, 1994—Palestinian parks car rigged with explosives next to bus in Afula, in northern Israel. Nine Israelis killed. Militant Muslim group Hamas claims responsibility.

Oct. 19, 1994—Palestinian suicide bomber kills 22 Israelis in bus explosion in Tel Aviv. Hamas claims responsibility.

Jan. 22, 1995—Two Palestinians blow themselves up at the Beit Lid junction in central Israel, killing 21 Israelis. Islamic Jihad claims responsibility.

April 9, 1995—Two Palestinians blow themselves up outside two Jewish settlements in the Gaza Strip, killing seven Israeli soldiers and an American. Hamas and Islamic Jihad claim responsibility.

Feb. 25, 1996—Palestinian suicide bombers blow up bus in Jerusalem and soldiers' hitchhiking post in coastal city of Ashkelon, killing 24 Israelis, two Americans and a Palestinian. Hamas claims responsibility.

March 3, 1996—Bus bomb in Jerusalem kills at least 18 people, including six Romanians and two Palestinians. Hamas claimed responsibility.

March 4, 1996—Suicide bomber blows himself up outside a Tel Aviv shopping center, killing at least 14 people.

July 30, 1997—Two bombers kill themselves and 15 others in an outdoor Jerusalem market. Leaflet signed by Hamas' military wing claims responsibility.

Sept. 4, 1997—Three suicide bombs, one after the other, in Jerusalem's main outdoor shopping mall, killing four people.

June 1, 2001—Suicide bomber blows himself up outside Tel Aviv nightclub, killing himself and 21 others.

Aug. 9, 2001—A suicide bomber kills 15 people in Jerusalem pizza restaurant.

Sept. 9, 2001—The first Israeli-Arab suicide bomber blows himself up at a railroad station in northern Israel, killing three others.

Nov. 29, 2001—A suicide bomber blows himself up on board a bus on a main highway in Israel's north, killing three passengers.

Islamic Jihad claims responsibility for the attack.

Dec. 1, 2001—Two suicide bombers blow themselves up in back-to-back explosions at a downtown Jerusalem pedestrian mall, killing at least 10 bystanders. *AP*

September 11 no longer US' 'bloodiest day'

NEW YORK—As officials continue to revise downward the estimates of the number of lives lost in the Sept. 11 terror attacks, a day of fierce battles during the US Civil War has reclaimed the dubious distinction as "bloodiest day in America," according to news reports.

The New York Times reported Sunday that Sept. 17, 1862, can once again claim the title of bloodiest day in US history, when at least 3,650 Confederate and Union soldiers died at the Battle of Antietam, and thousands of others were wounded.

The death toll in the World Trade Center attack originally was estimated to be near 7,000, but now hovers at around 3,300 and could decline further as officials continue to refine their count, the daily reported.

US officials said however, that the diminishing death toll in no way lessens the horror of the terror assaults.

"Our country was attacked, thousands of innocent Americans and citizens from other countries were killed and the terrorists have threatened to kill more," Philip Reeker, a deputy spokesman at the State Department, told the Times.

Authorities said they update their casualty figures on a daily basis as bodies are pulled from the rubble of the wrecked World Trade Center buildings.

Other names are eliminated by cross-checking, as authorities sometimes discover that people were listed in error. Dozens of names also have been dropped from lists provided by foreign consulates. *AFP*

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SAMSUNG gives you two good reasons why your side-by-side refrigerator should have a twin cooling system.

1

High Energy Efficiency

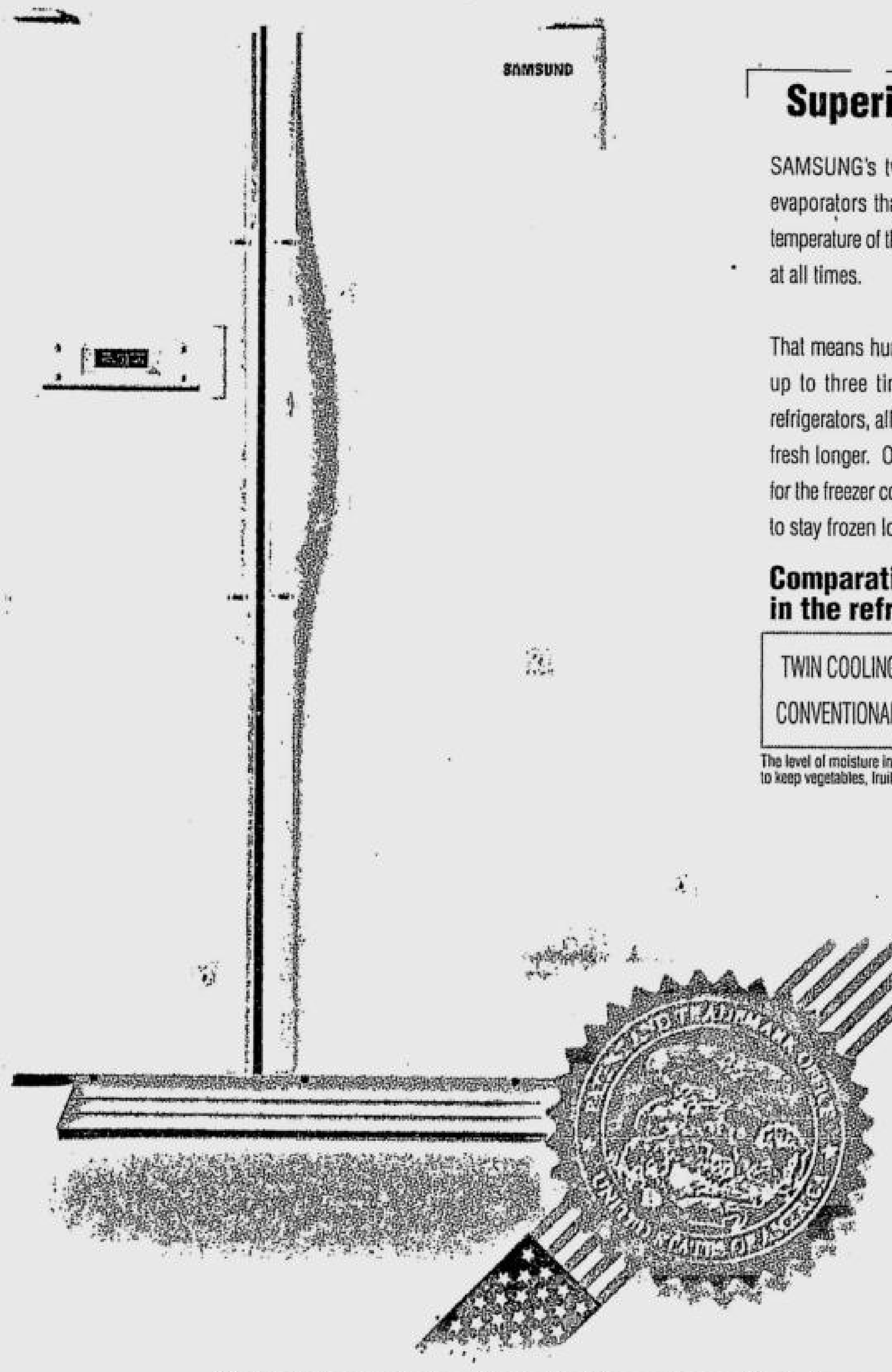
SAMSUNG's twin cooling system has two fans and two evaporators that work separately to maintain ideal temperature for the freezer and refrigerator sections more easily. Making sure that the cooling system is not overworked. The result: cooling operation is up to **30% more energy-efficient.** In fact, based on ISO Standard comparisons, SAMSUNG side-by-side refrigerators have a low average electrical consumption of only 535 Kwh per year compared to an average of 819 of other side-by-side refrigerators.

ISO Standard Comparisons*

Average energy consumption in Kwh

	SAMSUNG	Brand A	Brand B	Brand C	Brand D
Grade	A	C	C	C	C
Kwh/year	535	821	847	840	768

**Certified by the International Electronics Commission*



2

Superior Cooling Efficiency

SAMSUNG's twin cooling system uses two fans and two evaporators that work independently. To maintain the ideal temperature of the separate refrigerator and freezer compartments at all times.

That means humidity levels in the refrigerator section is kept up to three times higher than that of other side-by-side refrigerators, allowing vegetables and produce to stay crisp and fresh longer. On the other hand, independent cooling control for the freezer compartment lets meat and other perishable items to stay frozen longer.

Comparative humidity levels in the refrigerator compartment

TWIN COOLING	42%
CONVENTIONAL	13%

The level of moisture inside the refrigerator section is kept at up to three times higher to keep vegetables, fruits and other food stuff fresher for a longer period.

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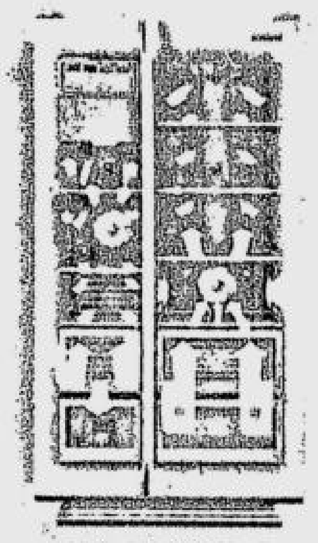

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PROMO PERIOD: OCT. 31 - DEC. 31, 2001 PER DTI-NCR PERMIT NO. 3708 SERIES OF 2001

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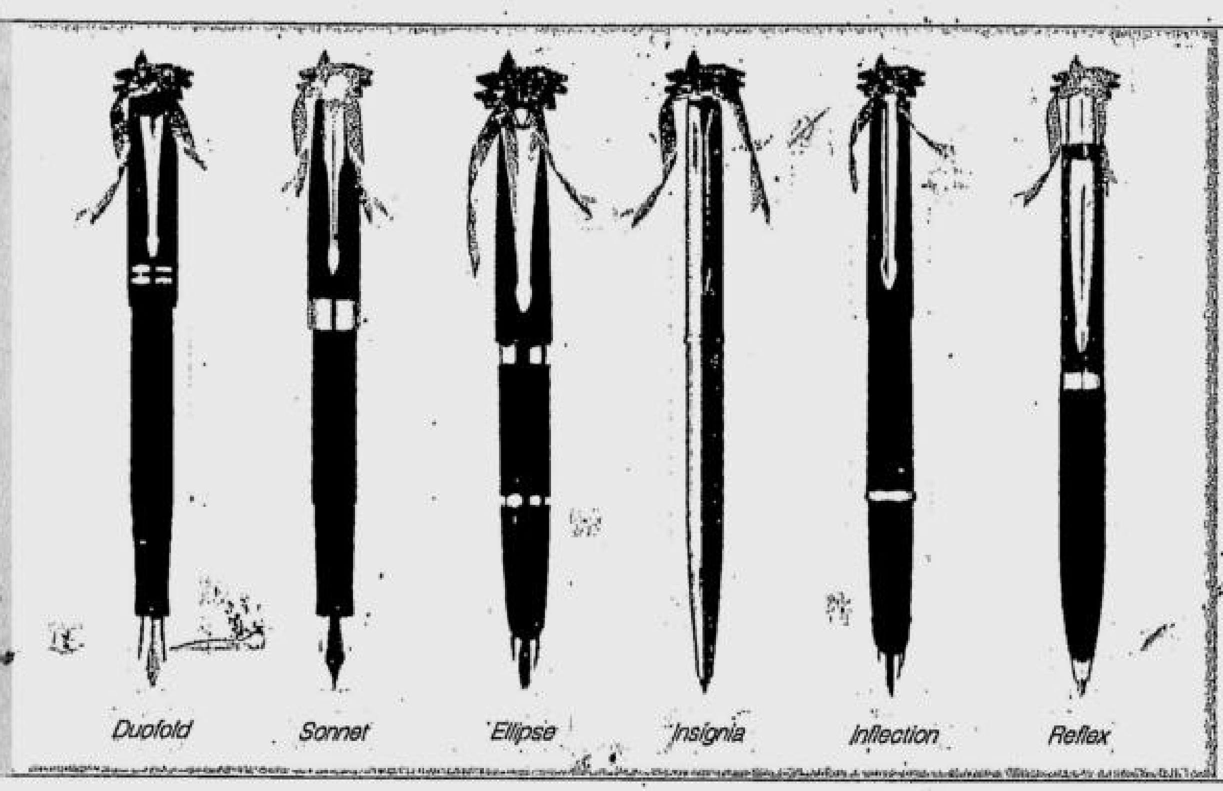

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Japanese greet royal baby with joy

TOKYO—The forbidding gates of Japan's Imperial Palace opened Sunday to let waves of well-wishers onto its manicured grounds to fete the birth of a baby girl to Crown Prince Naruhito and Crown Princess Masako.

Rituals honoring the birth Saturday of the royal baby—the imperial couple's first in eight years of marriage—started out as a family affair: Hours after delivery, a court messenger placed a sword and purple robes of silk beside the infant's pillow.

But on brilliant Sunday afternoon under a cloudless sky, it was the public's turn to take their party to the palace.

Tens of thousands of Japanese—from young children to elderly couples—lined up at the palace to sign a congratulatory book. Many waved Japanese flags and shouted "Banzai!"—or long life.

"Our social status is completely different, but as mothers I'm sure we are praying for the same things. I'm rooting for her," said Mayumi Kikuta, a housewife who like Masako is 37. She had come with her husband and four children to sign the registry.

The procession of people offering their congratulations at the palace began with Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, dressed in a tailcoat, who led a group of senior government officials.

"Many citizens are expressing their delight in a direct way... It is bright and heartwarming," Koizumi was reported as saying before he paid his respects.

In the evening, about ten thousand people were expected to join a lantern festival outside the palace organized by politicians and figures from the arts and academia.

But away from the festivities, the media were already beginning to debate whether Japan's imperial succession law should be changed to allow a woman to ascend to the throne.

Many Japanese have been fretting about the fate of the Chrysanthemum Throne—the world's oldest hereditary monarchy—because a male heir has not been produced since 1965, when Naruhito's younger brother, Prince Akishino, was born.

"The baby's birth makes it important to have a deeper discussion of the issue," the mass circulation Yomiuri newspaper said in an editorial.

Other commentators said Naruhito, 41 and Masako, 37, still have time.

"It wouldn't be appropriate to debate (the succession law) just after first child has just been born," the Mainichi newspaper said. *AP*

HUNDREDS of people clad in happi coats carry and push festival floats decorated with lanterns celebrating the birth of a new princess in the northern Japanese city of Murakami, the hometown of Crown Princess Masako, Dec. 1. *AP*

Nationalists swept away in Taiwan elections

TAIPEI—Taiwan's Nationalist Party was swept from its last political stronghold in elections on Saturday that transformed the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) of President Chen Shui-bian into the largest group in parliament.

The landslide defeat for the Nationalists, which held a majority in the outgoing legislature, is sure to alarm Beijing, which will see it emboldening the DPP to move Taiwan further towards independence.

The DPP picked up 87 seats in the 225-seat legislature, up from 66. The Nationalists won 68 seats, down from 123 in the 1998 election. Some deputies defected from the party last year leaving it with 110 seats.

The People First Party (PFP), led by former Nationalist stalwart James Soong, also scored impressive gains, more than doubling its number of seats from 20 to 46.

With no party gaining an outright majority, political horse-trading is likely to follow, with Chen seeking a coalition to tackle the island's worst ever recession and record unemployment and to mend fences with China.

"The end of elections is the beginning of cooperation," Chen said in a statement.

"During campaigning, there may be competition among parties or individuals, but the stability, security and prosperity of the country are the common language of the 23 million people and their common hope," Chen said.

Chen will be seeking to break up a Nationalist-led parliamentary alliance that has stymied his administration and which tried to sack him last year for scrapping plans to build the island's fourth nuclear power plant.

Parliament was the Nationalists' final redoubt after losing the presidency to Chen last year, having governed Taiwan for half a century since fleeing China in 1949.

There was no immediate reaction from Beijing. But Chinese analysts were taken aback by the gains of the DPP, which supports independence for Taiwan. Beijing regards the island as a renegade province.

"This was unexpected," said Fan Xizhou, director of the Taiwan Research Institute at Xiamen University. *Reuters*

Russian Navy chiefs axed; Kursk link seen

MOSCOW—Russia demoted three top navy commanders and sacked another eight admirals on Saturday in a clearout that some experts said was punishment for the Kursk nuclear submarine catastrophe in which 118 crew died.

Senior military officials denied a direct link with the Kursk disaster, saying the sanctions related to "serious failures in the organization of the military training activities of the fleet."

However, they came just hours after President Vladimir Putin received a preliminary report from Russia's top law officer into August 2000 naval exercises during which the Kursk sank.

The disaster, the worst in modern Russian naval history, saw Putin savaged for failing to end his holiday and take personal charge of the crisis.

On Saturday, a grim-faced navy chief Admiral Vladimir Kuroyedov, who is close to Putin, said three senior officers had been demoted: Northern Fleet commander Admiral Vyacheslav Popov, its chief of staff, Vice Admiral Mikhail Motsak, and its submarine fleet commander, Vice-Admiral Oleg Burtsev.

Their new ranks and posts were not announced.

Interfax news agency quoted Kuroyedov as saying that eight other admirals and three senior captains had been dismissed.

A few hours earlier, Putin had told Kuroyedov, his defense minister and military chief of staff during a Kremlin meeting that it was too early to issue a definitive ruling on what caused the Kursk disaster or say who was to blame.

But he ordered measures to improve the fleet and unspecified "staffing decisions." A year ago Putin rejected as premature attempts by Kuroyedov and Popov to resign, saying they should stay until the full facts surrounding the tragedy were known. *Reuters*

China ends its silence on AIDS

LONDON—A veil of secrecy still shrouds AIDS in some countries 20 years after it first reared its head but on Saturday China, the latest convert to openness, marked World AIDS Day by airing a shocking TV drama on the disease.

In South Africa, where more people live with HIV/AIDS than in any other country and the government is widely criticized for its ambiguous stance, former president Nelson Mandela called for victims to be given access to drugs that fight the disease.

"Nothing threatens us more today than HIV/AIDS... AIDS is a scourge threatening to undo all the gains we made in our generations of struggle," said Mandela, who headed the country's first post-apartheid government.

Close to five million people, or one in nine of the population, are affected in South Africa by the human immunodeficiency virus, HIV, or the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome that it invariably leads to.

World AIDS Day was marked by pressure groups and governments alike, and included calls by a group of Indian prostitutes for their profession to be legalized. In the Seychelles, the government announced it would offer free antiretroviral drugs.

In 16 countries, more than one 10th of people aged 15-49 are infected with HIV. Worldwide, more than 40 million people live with HIV or AIDS, including 4.5 million children.

Twenty years after scientists in the United States reported first clinical evidence of the disease, there is no still cure.

While the Chinese infection rates do not compare with the devastating statistics from Africa, Beijing has made a dramatic about-turn in recent months.

The world's most populous country was jolted into action after HIV infections surged 67.4 percent to 3,541 in the first half of 2001.

"This year the government has really stepped up its fight against AIDS because of the global situation," said AIDS expert Zhang Konglai, a professor at the Peking Union Medical College.

China's first television drama on AIDS, which had a potential audience of 92 percent of China's population of 1.3 billion through state-owned China Central Television, was partly a scare tactic. *Reuters*

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18 killed as Russian plane 'explodes'

MOSCOW—Up to 18 people were feared dead on Sunday after a flaming cargo aircraft apparently exploded in mid-air as it tried to make an emergency landing, a senior Emergencies Ministry official said.

The Il-76 transporter came down near the city of Okhotsk in the far eastern Khabarovsk region shortly after the captain told air traffic control he was making an emergency landing due to an on-board fire. The cause of the blaze was not immediately clear.

"According to our information from the Okhota region, the plane exploded in mid-air. People heard the sound of two explosions and saw flashes," Valery Sukhuborov, deputy chief of the Emergencies Ministry's far eastern region, told TV6 television.

On board were nine crew, four cargo handlers and five men serving in Russia's border guards service, which had chartered the Chukhot Air Cargo transporter. *Reuters*

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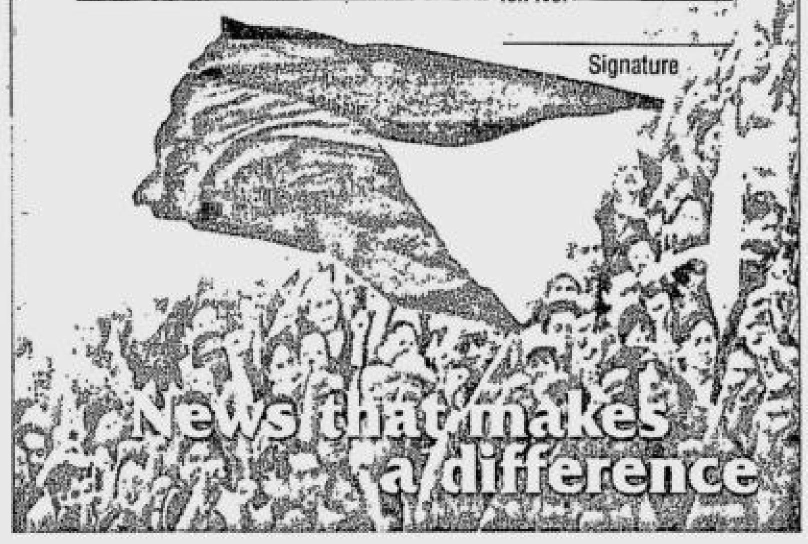

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Roundtrip sea fare per person: from P2,163

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- 2 breakfasts
- Roundtrip transfers

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P1,050.00 3D/2N

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Roundtrip sea fare per person: from P3,300

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Optional Sights & Activities: Sultan Kudarat
Add: Roundtrip airfare per person: from P7,181

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Roundtrip sea fare per person: P3,520
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DIPOLOG (Dakak)

P2,385.00 3D/2N

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P2,850.00 3D/2N

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- Swimming and snorkeling activities
- Roundtrip airport transfers
- Land transfers

Add: Roundtrip airfare per person: P5,558
Roundtrip sea fare per person: from P2,650

GENERAL SANTOS
Tuna Capital

P1,800.00 3D/2N

Inclusions:
- 3 days/2 nights at a hotel
- 2 breakfasts
- Roundtrip airport transfers

Optional Sights & Activities: General Santos Fish Port, Philbest Canning Corp., RD Export & Cold Storage, Shopping
Add: Roundtrip airfare per person: P5,396
Roundtrip sea fare per person: from P2,910

ILOILO

P1,200.00 3D/2N

Inclusions:
- 3 days/2 nights at a hotel
- 2 breakfasts
- Roundtrip airport transfers

Optional Sights & Activities: Iloilo City Heritage Tour, Golf Package, Guimaras Agri Tour, South/North Countryside Tours
Add: Roundtrip airfare per person: from P3,896
Roundtrip sea fare per person: from P2,271

LAGUNA/RIZAL

P2,200.00 2D/1N

Inclusions:
- 2 days/1 night at a hotel
- 1 breakfast
- Private transportation
- Visit to Antipolo Church, Pakil (Our Lady of Turumba), Blanco Museum, Nemiranda Gallery, Pacheco Gallery, Paete Woodcraft

Optional Sights & Activities: Visit to Lumban Embroidery (boat ride P580 per person)

LAOAG

P3,500.00 3D/2N

Inclusions:
- 3 days/2 nights at Fort Ilocandia
- On site transfers
- Vigan tour
- Roundtrip transfer from Laoag airport or Laoag Bus terminal
- Free entrance to Casino Filipino

Optional Sights & Activities: Pagudpud tour P750, Laoag City tour P650
Add: Roundtrip airfare per person: from P3,600
Roundtrip bus fare per person: P1,000

LEYTE
Enchanting Eastern Visayas

P1,600.00 3D/2N

Inclusions:
- 3 days/2 nights at MacArthur Hotel
- 2 breakfasts
- Roundtrip airport transfers

Optional Sights & Activities: Sohoton Cave, Marabut Marine Park, Sto. Nino Shrine and public market
Add: Roundtrip airfare per person: from P5,138
Roundtrip bus fare per person : from P1,714

MARINDUQUE
Sea, Sun & Spa

P1,900.00 3D/2N

Inclusions:
- 3 days/2 nights at a hotel
- 2 breakfasts
- Roundtrip airport transfers
- Whole day tour with lunch at Gaspar Island, Sulphur Springs & Sussana Hot Springs

Add: Roundtrip airfare per person : from P2,600
Roundtrip bus fare/ferry per person: P600

MINDORO, PUERTO GALERA

P2,820.00 3D/2N

Inclusions:
- 3 days/2 nights at a hotel
- 2 breakfasts
- Roundtrip airconditioned tourist bus
- Roundtrip ferry service
- Roundtrip jeepney service
- Tour coordinator's services

PAMPANGA

P3,950.00 3D/2N

Inclusions:
- 3 days/2 nights at a hotel
- 2 breakfasts
- Roundtrip transfers (Manila-Clark-Manila)
- Rolling Tour of Angeles & Clark

Optional Sights & Activities: Mt. Pinatubo Eco Tour

PALAWAN
Busuanga
WaterSports (Northern Palawan)

P6,000.00 3D/2N

Inclusions:
- 3 days/2 nights at Maribacan Bay
- Full board meal
- Roundtrip transfer by land & boat from Busuanga
- 1 hour use of sit-on kayak

Coron
Weekend Sailaway (Friday-Monday)

P6,400.00 3D/2N

Inclusions:
- Roundtrip passage (2 nights on WG&A and 1 night at Dive Link)
- Full board meals
- On site transfers
- Coron Island tour, Kayangan Lake, Maquinit Hot Springs, Gutob Bay Island Hopping, Kayaking

Puerto Princesa

P1,800.00 3D/2N

Inclusions:
- 3 days/2 nights at a hotel
- 2 breakfasts
- Roundtrip transfers

Optional Sights & Activities: Palawan Museum, Crocodile Farming Institute, city market, War Memorial, Cathedral, St. Paul Subterranean National Park
Add: Roundtrip airfare per person: P5,396
Roundtrip sea fare per person: P2,046

PANGASINAN

P1,600.00 3D/2N

Inclusions:
- 3 days/2 nights at San Fabian Hotel
- 2 breakfasts

Optional Sights & Activities: Our Lady of Manaoag, Señor Divino Tesoro Church, Lingayen Gulf Memorial, Hundred Islands, swimming, shopping
Add: Roundtrip bus fare per person: from P440

SUBIC BAY/OLONGAPO
"Shop Til You Drop"

P1,388.00 2D/1N

Inclusions:
- 2 days/1 night at Subic Int'l. Hotel
- 1 breakfast
- Roundtrip airconditioned transportation
- Subic Base Tour, Shopping

SUBIC BAY/OLONGAPO
"Shop Til You Drop"

P3,235.00 3D/2N

Inclusions:
- 3 days/2 nights at Subic Int'l. Hotel
- 2 breakfasts
- Roundtrip airconditioned transportation
- Subic Base Tour, Shopping

SURIGAO

P1,050.00 3D/2N

Inclusions:
- 3 days/2 nights at a hotel
- 2 breakfasts
- Roundtrip transfers

Optional Sights & Activities: Tour of Day-Asan Floating Village, Sogisi Island, Historical Sights, Mabua Pebble Beach; Cave Exploration
Add: Roundtrip airfare per person: P6,936
Roundtrip sea fare per person: from P2,630

TAGAYTAY/TAAL HERITAGE TOUR

P4,400.00 2D/1N

Inclusions:
- 2 days/1 night at Tagaytay Picnic Grove
- 1 breakfast
- Taal Heritage Tour (Leon Apacible Historical Landmark, Marcela Marino Agoncillo Museum & Monument, Basilica of San Martin de Tours, Church of Our Lady of Caysasay, shopping for native products and delicacies)
- Tagaytay City Tour (People's Park, Japanese Garden, Tagaytay Picnic Grove, Mushroom Burger Restaurant & Plantation, Residence Inn Mini Zoo, Flower Farm)
- Private transportation

TUGUEGARAO
Whitewater Rafting & Kayaking

P5,000.00 2D/1N

Inclusions:
- 2 days/1 night at a hotel
- 2 breakfasts, 2 lunches and 2 dinners
- All equipment necessary (kayaks, rafts, helmets, lifevest)
- Travel insurance coverage of P100,000
- Transportation in and around Tuguegarao City

Optional Sights & Activities: Callao & Sierra Caves, Pinaconauan and Chico River Rapids, bat cave, whitewater kayaking, rapelling
Add: Roundtrip airfare per person: P4,776
Roundtrip bus fare per person: P600

From CEBU
(same itinerary and inclusions as indicated in the Manila packages)

BACOLOD P1,400.00 3D/2N
Roundtrip airfare per person:P3,956
Roundtrip sea fare per person: from P376

BOHOL P2,800.00 3D/2N
Roundtrip airfare per person: P1,112
Roundtrip sea fare per person: from P200

BORACAY P3,200.00 3D/2N
Roundtrip airfare per person: P3,900
Roundtrip ferry (Caticlan) per person: from P60

BUTUAN P1,050.00 3D/2N
Roundtrip airfare per person: from P2,596

CAMIGUIN P5,500.00 3D/2N
Roundtrip airfare per person: P2,600
Roundtrip sea fare per person: from P650

DAVAO P2,300.00 3D/2N
Roundtrip airfare per person: from P4,498
Roundtrip sea fare per person: P1,970
Roundtrip bus fare per person: P854

DIPOLOG (Dakak) P2,385.00 3D/2N
Roundtrip sea fare per person: from P1,550

DUMAGUETE P2,850.00 3D/2N
Roundtrip airfare per person:P3,956
Roundtrip sea fare per person: from P376

GENERAL SANTOS P1,800.00 3D/2N
Roundtrip airfare per person:P4,156

ILOILO P1,200.00 3D/2N
Roundtrip airfare per person: from P3,518
Roundtrip sea fare per person: from P690

LEYTE P1,600.00 3D/2N
Roundtrip sea fare per person: from P420
Roundtrip bus fare per person: from P298

SURIGAO P1,050.00 3D/2N
Roundtrip airfare per person: P2,156
Roundtrip sea fare per person: P730
Roundtrip bus fare per person: P367

From DAVAO
(same itinerary and inclusions as indicated in the Manila packages)

BACOLOD P1,400.00 3D/2N
Roundtrip airfare (Davao-Cebu) per person: from P4,498
(Cebu-Bacolod) per person:P3,956
Roundtrip sea fare (Cebu-Bacolod) per person: from P376

BOHOL P2,800.00 3D/2N
Roundtrip airfare (Davao-Cebu) per person: P4,498;
(Cebu-Tagbilaran) per person: P1,112
Roundtrip sea fare (Cebu-Tagbilaran) per person: from P200

BORACAY P3,200.00 3D/2N
Roundtrip airfare (Davao-Cebu) per person: from P4,498
(Cebu-Caticlan) per person: P3,900
Roundtrip ferry (Caticlan) per person: from P60

BUTUAN P1,050.00 3D/2N
Roundtrip bus fare per person: from P500

CAMIGUIN P5,500.00 3D/2N
Roundtrip airfare (Davao-Cebu) per person: from P4,498;
(Cebu-Camiguin) per person: P2,600
Roundtrip sea fare (Cebu-Camiguin) per person: from P650

CEBU P3,500.00 3D/2N
Roundtrip airfare (Davao-Cebu) per person: from P4,498

COTABATO P3,700.00 3D/2N
Roundtrip bus fare per person: from P600

DUMAGUETE P2,850.00 3D/2N
Roundtrip airfare (Davao-Cebu) per person: from P4,498
(Cebu-Bacolod) per person:P3,956
Roundtrip sea fare (Cebu-Bacolod) per person: from P376

GENERAL SANTOS P1,800.00 3D/2N
Roundtrip sea fare per person: from P680
Roundtrip bus fare per person: from P250

ILOILO P1,200.00 3D/2N
Roundtrip airfare per person: from P3,195
Roundtrip sea fare per person: from P2,630

LEYTE P1,600.00 3D/2N
Roundtrip airfare (Davao-Cebu) per person: from P4,498;
Roundtrip sea fare (Cebu-Tacloban) per person: from P420
Roundtrip bus fare (Cebu-Tacloban) per person: from P298

SURIGAO P1,050.00 3D/2N
Roundtrip airfare (Davao-Cebu) per person: P4,498
Roundtrip sea fare (Cebu-Surigao) per person: P730
Roundtrip bus fare (Cebu-Surigao) per person: P367

From Subic/Clark

Airfare (Clark-Manila-Clark) per person: P2,700 (Clark-Cebu-Clark) P5,338

Bus fare: (Subic-Manila-Subic) per person: P266

From Laoag

Airfare (Laoag-Manila-Laoag) per person: P3,600

Bus fare: (Laoag-Manila-Laoag) per person: P1,000

DAY TOURS

BULACAN Historical Tour P1,000.00 per person

CAVITE-BATANGAS Historical Tour P1,990.00 per person

CAYLABNE P1,900.00 per person

CORREGIDOR P900.00 per person
(Optional Tour: Light & Sound Show - P150.00/person)

ISLAND COVE P1,350.00 per person

QUEZON PROVINCE Culinary Tour P1,400.00 per person

RIZAL-LAGUNA Cottage Industry/ Craft Tour P1,782.00 per person

Inclusions:
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- Entrance Fees

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Across the NATION

TONY BERGONIA, Assistant Editor

Chavit belittles plunder charge

By Michael Lim Ubac

FORMER Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson, the government's star witness in the plunder case of Joseph Estrada, will himself be charged for plunder, according to the Save Ilocos Sur Alliance (Sisa).

Sisa officials announced last Thursday at the National Press Club in Manila that they would ask this week Ombudsman Aniano Desierto to indict Singson for plunder for at least 12 counts of irregularities allegedly committed when he was still the governor.

The 12 separate incidents of irregular transactions, unliquidated cash advances, lopsided contracts, ghost projects, among others, amounted to more than P50 million.

Most of the "incidents" were contained in a report prepared by the Commission on Audit in 1999.

But Singson dismissed the threats by Sisa to sue him.

In a telephone interview on Tuesday last week, Singson said the plunder case, if filed, would not prosper.

"*Wala yan dahil* (That's nothing because) they just fabricate evidence or documents against me," he said.

"They are doing all these things for publicity and they are being handled by my detractors led by Erap (Estrada)," he said.

Singson said he was confident he would not suffer the fate of Estrada, his former friend and drinking buddy.

In an earlier radio broadcast in Vigan City, Singson accused his local critics of "helping" his detractors in plotting against his life.

Furious over the series of charges filed against him by Sisa, Singson went on air over radio stations in Ilocos Sur Tuesday morning to deny allegations in the complaints filed by Sisa before the Ombudsman.

What also angered Singson were comments that he was inconsistent in his explanation on the alleged anomalous transactions that he was involved in when he was governor.

Singson said the complainants were being used by his detractors to destroy his reputation.

"They are just poisoning the minds of the people of Ilocos Sur," Singson said.

But Nestor Segismundo, Sisa president, denied Singson's accusations.

"I won't dare risk my life just to push the interest of any national or local politician for whatever consideration—financial or anything," Segismundo, who was among the complainants, told the INQUIRER.

"I am putting my life on the line because I believe the people of Ilocos Sur deserve justice and a better future," he said.

Some of Sisa's charges were based on documents prepared by a slain Commission on Audit official in Ilocos Sur, Agustin Chan.

Chan's murder has not been solved.

Immunity

It was still unclear whether Singson would invoke his immunity from prosecution.

Singson was granted immunity by Ombudsman Aniano Desierto after he agreed to testify against Estrada in connection with the illegal gambling payoffs. However, the immunity only covers cases involving jueteng payoffs and the other charges lodged against Estrada.

Saying they were ready to face all consequences—even death—Segismundo and secretary general David Roca vowed to see to it that Singson get punished for "stealing money and progress from Ilocos Sur."

Segismundo said Singson should be ready to undergo what his former close friend, Estrada, went through during the aborted impeachment trial.

"But the standard is very different in this case," said Roca. "It's because we never stole with Chavit just like what he did to Erap. And we're not asking any favor from the former president just like when Chavit asked Erap for the Bingo 2-ball to be given to him."

Lawyer Estelita Cordero, counsel for Sisa, said the group had proof that the amount allegedly taken by Singson and his cohorts "was more than P50 million, which is a requirement before an incumbent or a former government official could be charged with plunder."

Cordero and Segismundo said the two graft complaints earlier filed against Singson with the Ombudsman's Office would be incorporated in the plunder complaint.

"Actually, we will file the graft complaints separately since the irregular incidents were (a) series of acts. But we will ask the Ombudsman to consolidate them into a plunder complaint when it decides to file the charges with the Sandiganbayan," Cordero said.

Singson said he intended to sue the complainants for moral and exemplary damages. "Malicious prosecution should not be tolerated in our society," he added. ***With a report from Leoncio Balbin, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

4,000 workers jobless in W. Visayas

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—Nearly 4,000 workers in the private sector in Western Visayas lost their jobs from January to October this year, government statistics showed.

Records from the Department of Labor and Employment regional office showed that as of October, 40 firms closed shop while 92 reduced their workforce, affecting 3,875 workers.

The same record showed that most of the firms (109) cited economic reasons for the retrenchments.

Most of the workers who lost their jobs (2,224) were from firms that shut down while 1,651 were from firms those that reduced their workforce.

Still, the figure was an improvement compared to last year's when 188 firms laid off 6,609 workers in the region.

From January to October last year, 56 firms had ceased operations, taking away jobs from 3,780 workers. At least 2,829 workers lost their jobs when 132 firms reduced their workforce in the same period last year.

Negros Occidental had the highest number of firms affected this year with 92 followed by Iloilo with 35. Two firms each in Guimaras and Aklan laid off workers while Antique had one.

Thirty-four of the affected firms belonged to the wholesale and retail trade sectors while 24 were in the community, social and personal services sectors. The rest were in the agriculture, mining and manufacturing sectors, among others.

The bulk of the laid off workers (886) came from the manufacturing sector and the agricultural, fishery and forestry sectors (686).

The Labor Force Survey of the National Statistics Office in July placed the labor force in the region at 2.7 million. The number of employed workers reached 2.426 million, 44,000 lower than the same period last year.

The employment rate reached 89.9 percent for the region.

Capiz had the highest employment rate at 93.9 percent while Antique posted the lowest at 14.1 percent.

MASO vs MASA

Ang monopolya ay mapag-manipula

Through the Yasay-designed rehabilitation plan of PAL,
Lucio Tan monopolized the operations of NAIA 2
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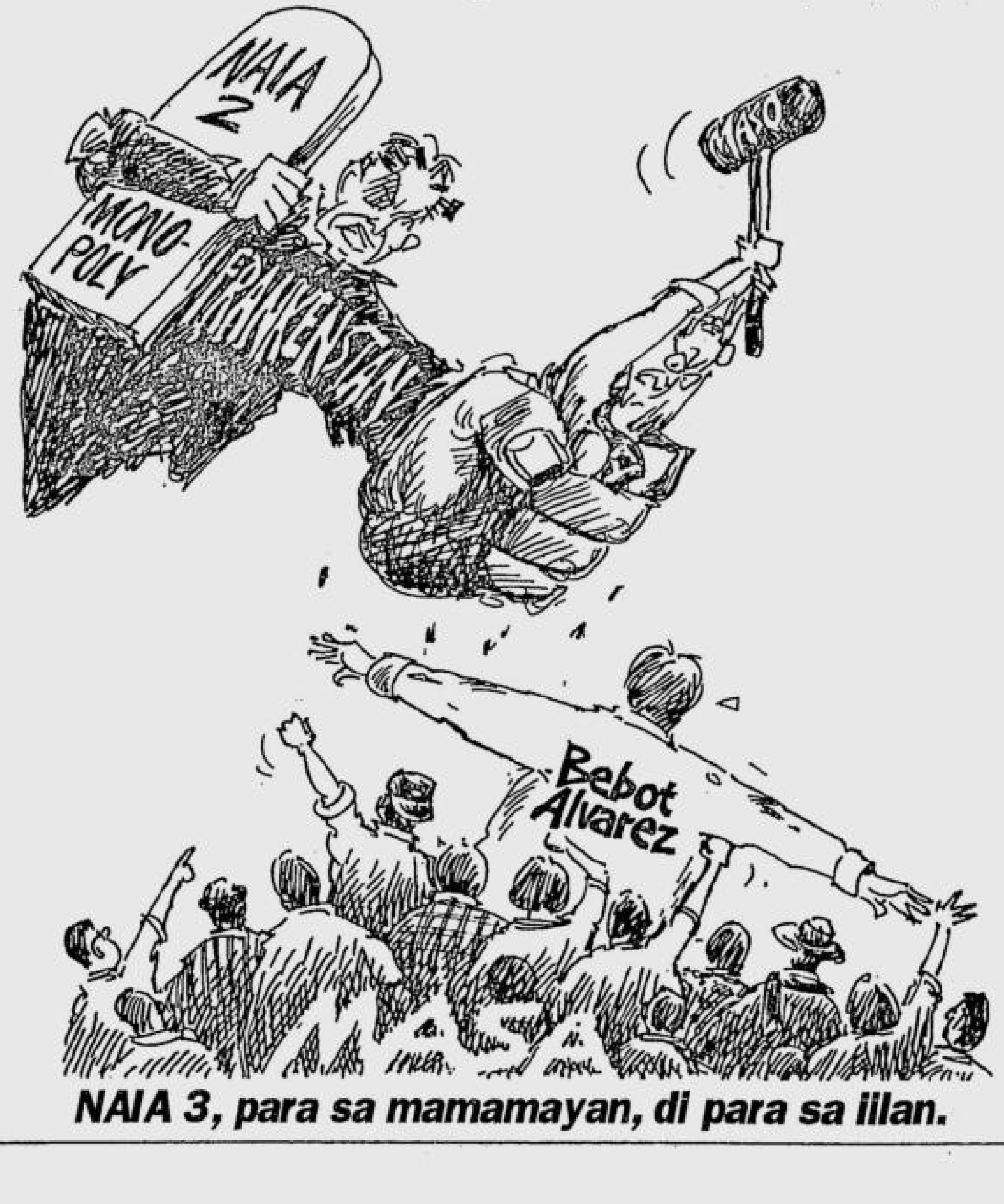
Now, his consortium wants control of NAIA 3 as well
to the further detriment of the government and the Filipino people.



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P7M IN 'GHOST DELIVERIES'

Report confirms armchair scam

By TONETTE OREJAS
PDI Central Luzon Desk

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—The ghost deliveries last July of many of the 9,871 armchairs worth P7.086 million intended for 66 schools in Central Luzon, mostly in Pampanga, were confirmed by the Department of Education in a report obtained here Tuesday.

The non-delivery by Mic-Mac Manufacturing Inc., managed by Benny Ruy, was made through the falsification of allocation, delivery and memorandum receipts, as well as the forgery of signatures by principals and teachers, a report by a DepEd team showed.

The team, composed of Tarlac schools superintendent Victoria Aguas, Zambales assistant school superintendent Raulito Moscoso, secondary education division chief Magdalena Roque, Cabanatuan City assistant school superintendent Simon Barlis and DepEd regional legal unit chair Mariza Gonzales, recommended the blacklisting of the company.

The team also advised the filing of charges against the supplier.

The 18-page report issued on Nov. 5 was not officially released by the DepEd. It was furnished to reporters on Tuesday by teachers in Pampanga.

The team noted the "radical departure" between the original and altered allocation lists.

The original list, signed by bids committee chair Dr. Pedro Pascua, was attached to Disbursement Voucher No. 01007-1119.

Under this list, 92 elementary schools, mostly in Pampanga, were supposed to receive 9,871 armchairs.

The altered allocation list, which has no official receipt from the Central Luzon education office, reduced the number of beneficiary schools to only 66.

The change, according to the team, "favored other divisions which were originally listed to receive much less than what (they) actually received, to the detriment of other divisions in greater need of the (armchairs)."

Apparently, the favored division, which was unnamed in the report, was Zambales. Originally, it was supposed to receive only 400 armchairs. In the falsified list, Zambales stood to get 2,450.

The report said Vilma Labrador, DepEd Central Luzon director, was on leave when the armchairs were purchased and paid.

In her previous assignments outside Central Luzon, Labrador was also questioned for missing or overpriced supplies. She was, however, cleared of the charges, reports said.

But in this scam, Pampanga suffered the biggest losses. From 42 schools, the supplier reduced these to 22. From an allocation of 4,681 armchairs, Pampanga's share dropped to 2,037.

In their separate affidavits, principals and teachers in those schools attested to the ghost deliveries.

Two schools received only 150 armchairs.

The team, in one of its seven major findings, said the company "intentionally falsified the signatures of 42 school principals in the division of Pampanga, and intentionally submitted before this office (DepEd regional office) fake memorandum receipts and delivery receipts."

The team said there was evidence of neglect of duty on the part of the DepEd regional office's inspection and acceptance committee.

The committee certified the documents "only for the purpose of expediting the processing… necessary for payments."

The committee made only random inspection in determining the number of the armchairs and "tolerat(ed) the supplier's misdemeanor of submitting fake documents."

The committee did not also submit a report of all inspections or attached these to the voucher before the payment was made. The committee said this was a violation of purchase procedures prescribed by the Commission on Audit.

8
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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Mindanao and the Eastern sections of Luzon and Visayas will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and isolated thunderstorms particularly over Northeastern Mindanao. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rainshowers.

SOURCE: PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	HI 31° Lo 23°
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	HI 23° Lo 13°
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	HI 29° Lo 22°
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	HI 32° Lo 20°
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	HI 32° Lo 23°
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	HI 30° Lo 20°
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	HI 30° Lo 25°
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	HI 30° Lo 20°
Bacolod	Partly Cloudy	HI 30° Lo 23°
Roxas	Partly Cloudy	HI 30° Lo 25°
Cebu	Partly Cloudy with Rains	HI 32° Lo 23°
Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains	HI 31° Lo 24°
Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains	HI 29° Lo 23°
Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains	HI 31° Lo 22°
Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains	HI 30° Lo 22°
Davao	Cloudy with Rains	HI 31° Lo 24°

Compiled by: Ray Leyesa, PDI Research/12/03/01

ROUNDUP

300 traffic volunteers

DAGUPAN CITY—Some 300 volunteers have formed a group called Yellow Caps Movement to increase the number of traffic enforcers and help ease traffic jams here. Mayor Benjamin Lim said the volunteers, composed of students, drivers, journalists and residents, took basic training on traffic rules on Thursday. Police will accompany the volunteers from 6:30 to 9 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. Lim said the Yellow Caps Movement also aims to educate and encourage motorists and pedestrians on obeying traffic rules. ***Yolanda Fuertes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

2 police officials hurt

CAMP ADDURU, Tuguegarao City—Two instructors from the explosive ordnance and disposal unit of Camp Crame were hurt when they accidentally discharged the extracted fuse of an 81mm mortar shell in their quarters here. Supt. Juan Urani Jr., regional operations and plans division chief, said SP04 Rodolfo Samar and SP01 Edgardo Cruz were treated at the Cagayan Valley Medical Center. Samar, who lost a finger while Cruz, who was hit in the chest, were members of a team training 61 policemen from Cagayan Valley on measures to combat terrorism. ***Estanislao Caldez, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

Fake fertilizer seized

NAGUILIAN, La Union—Police seized at least 4,000 bottles of fake fertilizers worth P4 million from the house of a businessman in Barangay Imelda here. Also confiscated were thousands of fake copies of labels of Farmate, a fertilizer brand, empty bottles and caps, including an unlicensed 12-gauge shotgun. Supt. Danilo Galapon, Criminal Investigation and Detection Unit (Cidu) regional chief, identified the businessman as Ramon Javier. The raid came after a Farmate distributor filed a complaint at the regional trial court in San Fernando City for violation of the Intellectual Property Code of the Philippines.

Peter La. Julian, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Death to rapist

GUAGUA, Pampanga—A judge here meted out the death penalty on a 40-year-old man for raping a 5-year-old girl in 1996. Judge Rogelio Gonzales of the Guagua municipal trial court found Ricardo Miranda of Barangay San Pedro here guilty of raping the girl. Miranda was the second man to have received the death penalty from Gonzales. Three years ago, Gonzales handed the same decision on a man, who also raped a minor.

Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Fire guts superstore

COTABATO CITY—Firefighters were still trying to put off a fire yesterday, three days after it gutted down a department store here. Sugni Superstore owner Mike Khemani placed the damages at P80 million. SFO4 Samad Candao, Cotabato City fire chief, said 48 hours after the fire started Friday, black smoke was still billowing from the two-story department store on Bonifacio Street. Two fire volunteers were hurt while 11 Dalmatians, German Shepherds and Dobberman were charred to death by the fire. "We were told the fire started at the store's grocery area, just under the plastic wares section," Candao said. ***Edwin O. Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

NPA blamed for logging

MATI, Davao Oriental—The provincial environment and natural resources officer of Davao Oriental has blamed New People's Army rebels for the massive cutting of trees in Cateel town. He said NPA guerrillas there are protecting illegal loggers. Penro Napoleon Paje said the cutting of trees could only be stopped "if an Army battalion is put there." At least 60 cubic meters of illegally cut logs worth P70,000 were confiscated in Cateel recently.

Ferdinand O. Zuasola, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Police officers awarded

OROQUIETA CITY—At least three police officers in Misamis Occidental received cash rewards from the provincial government for their active participation in a renewed drug campaign that led to the seizure of almost a kilo of shabu in just three days. Misamis Occidental Gov. Loreto Ocampos handed over the P20,000 reward to PO1 Julito Candawan, PO1 Dean Alvin Lanipa and SPO1 Patricio Jalapit Jr. in ceremonies at the provincial police headquarters recently.

Ryan D. Rosauro, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Heavy equipment burned

DAVAO CITY—Suspected New People's Army rebels burned some P3 million worth of heavy equipment at a construction site in Sitio Behind, Barangay Malitbog, Panabo City, Davao del Norte on Thursday. Police said the firm Person Construction owned the two Komatsu backhoes that were burned by the rebels. The police said the company's failure to give revolutionary taxes to the NPA rebels could be the motive behind the attacks.

Anthony S. Allada, PDI Mindanao

FAD TOOTS SOBERANO

An unidentified man catches the attention of Lt. Gen. Benjamin P. Defensor Jr., chief of the Philippine Air Force, and other top Air Force officials for wearing a shirt bearing the image of who could be the world's most infamous man nowadays—Osama bin Laden. The shirt drew curious looks during an Air Force function in La Union.

Mayor orders son held for drugs, wife abuse

ANGELES CITY—Mayor Carmelo Lazatin ordered the police to arrest his son over a daughter-in-law's complaint of physical threats on Friday night.

Policemen found guns and noted the presence of a suspected drug pusher inside the car of Carmelo "Pogi" Lazatin Jr. when they arrested him.

The guns and the presence of suspected drug pusher Edgar Dizon in the Mitsubishi Space Wagon of the young Lazatin were reported by a close male relative of the mayor's daughter-in-law Tiffany.

Supt. Arturo Cacdac, Angeles police chief, said they found two .45 cal. pistols and an airgun reportedly belonging to the bodyguards of Mayor Lazatin.

One of the relatives of the young Lazatin's wife reported seeing some sachets of shabu and a few small firearms in the car.

A police report on the arrest was not yet prepared when the INQUIRER interviewed Cacdac on Saturday morning.

Cacdac, however, confirmed that Dizon drove Lazatin's car when this was encircled by eight policemen in posh Villa Angelina here.

Dizon, according to reports, was arrested but subsequently released by the National Bureau of Investigation last October in Carmenville, also in this city.

Dizon was not arrested on Friday.

But it took a wife's courage to speak out against physical threats and a father's determination to end his son's dependence on shabu that led to the younger Lazatin's arrest.

Lazatin, 32, was hooked on illegal drugs since his teen days, the mayor said.

On early Saturday, hours after the father and son talked, Mayor Lazatin sent his son to a drug rehabilitation center in Parañaque, where he said his son had been treated twice.

According to a police report, Tiffany, 32, broke her silence when she, assisted by a female cousin, reported on early Friday that Lazatin "poked a pistol of unknown caliber at them and their children (while) under the influence of unknown drugs."

The incident happened on Nov. 29 in their house. Tiffany and her children escaped and hid in a neighbor's house.

Although gripped by fear for herself and her children, Tiffany complained of getting physical threats and enduring verbal abuse from her husband.

Lazatin ordered the arrest of his son after his son escaped a police dragnet by changing vehicles, Cacdac said.

Finally caught at past 9 p.m. on Friday, Lazatin resisted arrest. ***Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk***

Firecracker factory explodes; 1 dead, 4 hurt

By Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—A woman was killed while four others, including a female teenager, were badly injured in an explosion that occurred while they were making firecrackers inside a makeshift pyrotechnics factory in Sitio Naga Lawis, Barangay Babag II, Lapulapu City on Friday afternoon.

Killed on the spot was Emedia Cañete, 42, a widow from Sitio Cogon, Cordova town, which is also on Mactan Island where Lapulapu City is located. Her body was charred almost beyond recognition.

The injured were Laurente Hermelando, 31, of Babag II; Beatriz Maravillas, 19; of Barangay Camolinas, Cordova; Priscilla Sitoy, 35, and her daughter, 16-year-old Roselyn, both of Camolinas, Cordova.

Maravillas suffered third-degree burns that affected 90 percent of her body. Her face was also badly burned.

She is now confined at the Don Vicente Sotto Memorial Medical Center in Cebu City, along with Roselyn Sitoy.

Hermelando and Priscilla Sitoy were brought to the Mactan Community Hospital.

The other three victims suffered second-degree burns. Hermelando suffered burns in the back and lacerated wounds in the right hand. Priscilla Sitoy suffered burns in the left hand. Her daughter also suffered second-degree burns but it was not established what parts of her body were injured.

At the time of the explosion, at around 4:15 p.m., they were working in a shed owned by couple Virgillo and Haidee Batucan, who both hail from Danao City.

The fire caused by the explosion later spread to a house adjacent to the makeshift factory owned by Ricardo Ando, also a pyrotechnics manufacturer. Ando, who was alone in his house at that time, escaped the blast unhurt.

Police investigator SPO4 Jeoffrey Baguio said it was Hermelando who caused the accident.

Baguio said Hermelando confessed to him that he was loading powder into a casing for a firecracker called "*kwitis*" when it ignited.

Baguio said Cañete died on the spot because she was trapped in the middle of the shed-like structure and was surrounded by tables.

Benjie Agnotin, 25, also a worker for the Batucans, said there were at least 15 workers inside the firecracker factory when the explosion occurred but the others were able to run out of the shed before it was consumed by fire.

Agnotin, along with co-worker Mary Anne Gahoygahoy, brought the injured to the hospital.

Mayors seek CA nod of DOJ chief

PEREZ

A GROUP of local officials has endorsed the confirmation by the bicameral Commission on Appointments of President Macapagal-Arroyo's nomination of Hernando Perez as justice secretary.

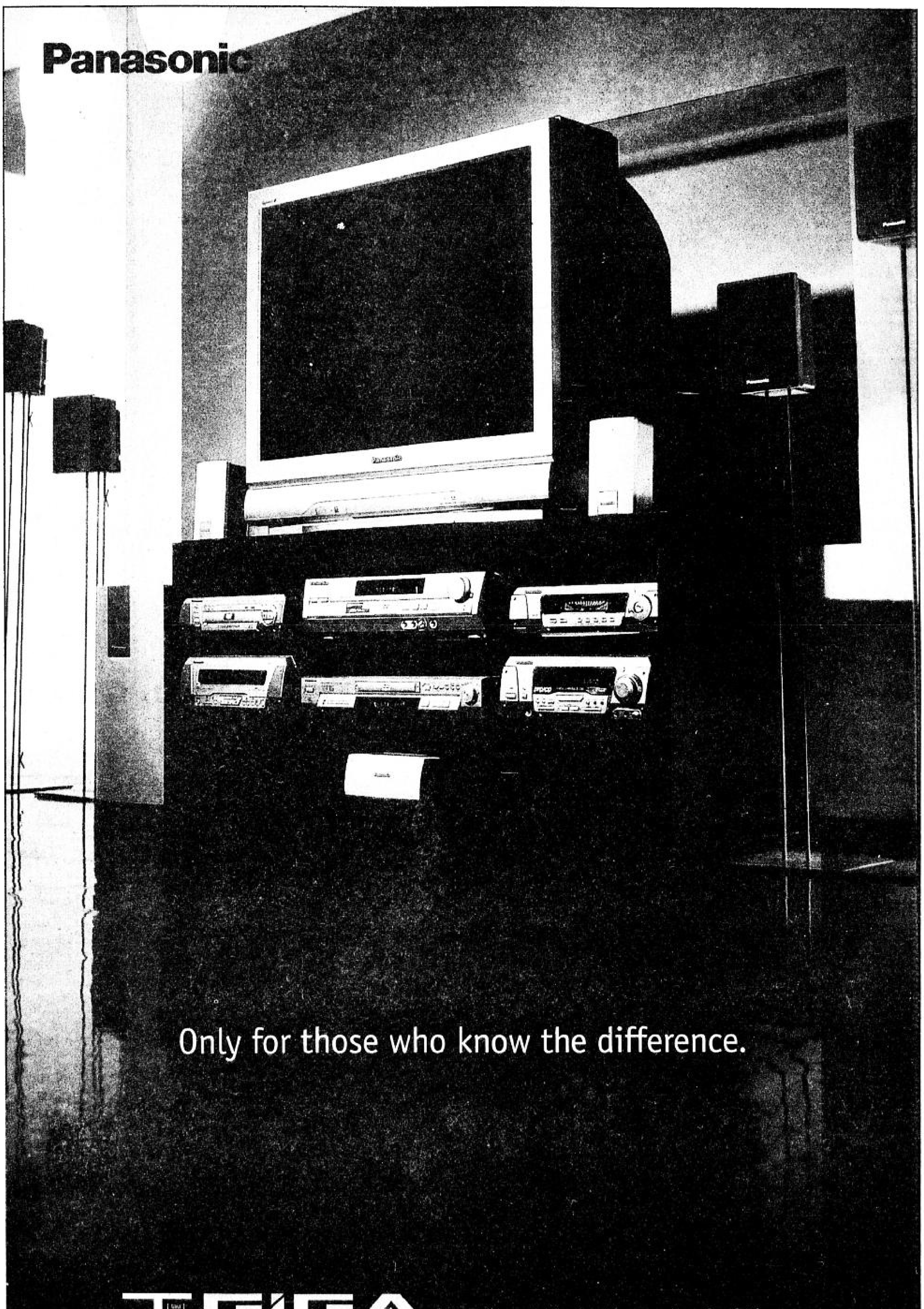
In a statement, the League of Cities of the Philippines said it wrote a letter to Senate President Franklin Drilon, who also chairs the CA, to endorse Perez's confirmation.

The group's letter cited Perez's "track record as a public servant and (his) continuing commitment to uphold the rule of law" as grounds for his confirmation.

"The League of Cities of the Philippines believes in the integrity, competence and leadership abilities of Secretary Perez," said Tagaytay City Mayor Francis Tolentino, head of the league.

The statement quoted Tolentino as saying that as a lawyer, Perez "is among the country's few best corporate lawyers whose expertise was helpful during the impeachment trial of then President Joseph Estrada."

As justice secretary Perez led a team of government and private prosecutors in preparing and filing plunder and several other criminal cases against Estrada.



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Malacañang blinks on coco levy deal

(From page A1)

P. Nantes (Quezon, LP), Del R. de Gùzman (Marikina City, Lakas) and Ted Failon (Leyte, Ind.) said the bill would declare the coco levy as public funds to be "used exclusively" for the rehabilitation of the coconut industry.

Outside Congress, the country's largest militant peasant organization said it would take to the streets to oppose the compromise deal brokered by Dante Ang, the President's private publicist.

"The President will surely celebrate Christmas with a headache, we are set to bring this battle to the parliament of the streets," said Rafael Mariano, chair of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP).

He said Ms Macapagal was obviously following in the footsteps of ousted President Joseph Estrada who once tried to use the coco levy fund to cling to power.

"The cash-trapped Macapagal administration is determined to forge a deal with Cojuangco to use the fund . . . to beef up her war chest for the 2004 presidential race," Mariano said.

Ang said the proposed settlement "seeks to put at least P50 billion or 15 percent (of the coco levy funds) into a perpetual trust fund with the interest earnings going to the farmers and the coconut industry."

Under the deal, 20 percent of the interests will go to Cocofed, 15 percent to the trust fund, 40 percent to farmers' groups, and 25 percent to the government.

The P50 billion constitutes the Coconut Industry Investment Fund invested in 27 percent of San Miguel Corp., the country's prime food and beverage firm chaired by Cojuangco.

The levy, collected from coconut farmers from 1973 to 1982 during the Marcos regime, totaled P9 billion but has since grown to at least P130 billion.

The fisherfolk group Pamalakaya warned that Ms Macapagal might soon find herself "on her own" if she did not return the coconut levy fund to the farmers.

Ground for impeachment

Pamalakaya said Ms Macapagal's endorsement of the compromise settlement could be used against her as a ground for possible impeachment.

"The only option for President Macapagal now is to shoot down the coco levy deal, transfer the coconut levy fund to the custody of trusted peasant associations and proceed with the prosecution of those who made a fortune out of the coconut farmers' money," Rodolfo Sambajon, Pamalakaya national chair, said.

"The government wants justice for the farmers and the only way it can secure justice for them . . ., and I'm speaking for myself, is through a compromise," Ang said.

Ang said the compromise settlement was almost a done deal.

"There's one hurdle left: government. The coconut farmers and Cocofed who are claiming the funds have already agreed to a settlement," Ang said in a phone interview.

This was confirmed by Efren Villaseñor, director of the Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA), who continues to represent farmers through the Pambansang Koalisyon ng mga Magsasaka at Manggagawa sa Niyugan (PKMMN).

"The farmers and Cocofed are currently finalizing the details of the agreement. After this stage, we'll take it to the PCGG (Presidential Commission on Good Government) for its endorsement before the Sandiganbayan," Villaseñor said.

"We're waiting for the final outcome," Ang said.

Ang said representatives from the farmers and Cocofed were skirting the issue of whether the levy was a private or public fund.

"It's the end game that is important. The money must now be used for the coconut farmers," Ang said.

Ang reiterated that he was performing his role as mediator between the two sides in his private capacity.

"This does not have the blessings of the President," Ang said of his longtime but supposedly non-paying client.

2-page agreement

Villaseñor said that following the Sept. 27 consultation between farmers and the Cocofed in Davao City, the two parties executed a two-page "mutual agreement" on Oct. 28.

"This mutual agreement contained general principles of a settlement which are now being worked out," Villaseñor said.

He said he was among those representing farmers in the continuing talks with Cocofed, represented by its managing director Manolo del Rosario.

Oscar Santos, a member of the PCA board, said what was at stake was not only the money but also the integrity of the country's judicial system.

"Does it mean that with only the power and influence of a single man, he could always hold hostage the interest of the majority of the Filipino people, no matter how crucial and important it is for the government?" Santos said.

He was referring to Cojuangco.

"What if similar cases arise in the future? Can we no longer depend on the fairness of the members of the court?" he said.

Santos noted that Cojuangco also held hostage the Estrada presidency.

Santos is a proponent of a multisectoral task force that has long been working for the return of the coconut levy to farmers.

The task force was formed during the time of Estrada.

He recalled that during the past administration, his group submitted at least 30 drafts of an executive order to Malacañang on how to dispose of the coconut levy.

He said Estrada did not act on these because he still needed the go-signal of Cojuangco.

He also questioned the role of Ang in the compromise deal.

"Is he a public official. What was he doing there. What was his authority?," Santos asked.

The militant group Sanlakas also demanded an explanation from Macapagal on the role of Ang in the negotiations.

"If Ang's role was not clearly defined, what was he doing there? If he was not representing the government, could it be that he was acting for the First Couple and Danding Cojuangco?" said Wilson Fortaleza, Sanlakas national president.

Ang said he was invited to "referee or mediate" between Cocofed and small farmers groups led by PKMMN.

Fair deal

"It is a fair deal and it would ensure that there would be money in farmers' pockets," Ang said.

"Why can't they wait before the agreement has been finalized. If it has been finalized they could come in and criticize its weak points," Ang further noted. "Everything here is transparent."

"What justice are they talking about? The case languishing in the courts for 16 years?" Ang lambasted his critics. "Justice is feeding the farmers, this is the bottom line here."

Ang said the next step was for Cocofed and the PKMNN to work out the details of the agreement, which they would submit to the PCGG.

Tiglao assured that the President would take into account all objections "and make her decision if the point comes."

"I would like to emphasize again and again that this agreement would have to be cleared by the PCGG and then approved by Sandiganbayan. It is unfair that news reports claim that it is the President's initiative," Tiglao said.

He said Ang had denied claiming that his participation in the Sept. 27 talks for a compromise deal had the approval of the President.

"The President cannot involve herself in this case because it would fall under the rule of sub judice," Tiglao said, referring to the cases pending before both the Sandiganbayan and the Supreme Court. ***With reports from Agnes E. Donato and Gerald G. Lacuarta***

No money involved in deal, says aide

(From page A1)

"If our President suddenly agrees on a settlement, there are no commissions because nobody will work on this except the farmers," said Gonzales.

But he said lawyers could earn from the settlement. "There's really a legal process, which was started during the time of Aquino. It's a legal process of addressing the coco levy. It's a legal case," he said.

"When this is settled, a lot of lawyers will make a lot of money. And lawyers are making a lot of money on this. From the time of Ms Aquino to the present," Gonzales said.

He claimed that he was not officially involved in the negotiations.

"My only involvement is with the farmers' groups, which happen to be social democrats, the ones who signed (the deal). Danding (Eduardo Cojuangco Jr.) agreed to it, (which was) brokered by Archbishop (Fernando) Capalla of Davao. This negotiation is done with the supervision of the bishops," said Gonzales, head of the Partido Demokratiko Sosyalista ng Pilipinas.

He said he was just helping out the farmers' groups, which recently aligned themselves with Cojuangco, chair of San Miguel Corp.

"I am not getting any commission from this. I am the one even spending for this," Gonzales said.

Gonzales clarified that there was no negotiation between Cojuangco and the government.

"The negotiation is between the farmers' groups and Danding. And then, the farmers' groups have sent the President their stand on the matter," he said.

"Now, they have a common position. Now the negotiation with the government can begin," he said.

But there are still differences on the character of the funds (whether public or private) and who should manage the trust fund, according to Gonzales.

Under the proposed compromise settlement, a perpetual trust fund will come from the P57 billion representing the 27-percent share in San Miguel Corp. under 14 holding companies. The San Miguel shares were bought allegedly using coco levy funds.

"The farmers believe that it is a public fund but it is subject to Supreme Court interpretation," Gonzales said.

"That is why the proposal of the peasant groups is for the Commission on Audit and an independent private group to audit the trust fund," he said.

He believed that Ms Macapagal would side with the farmers.

Gonzales said the coco levy was a public fund, and that the beneficiary of the trust fund "should not favor any group."

No guarantee

The coconut trust fund should be for all farmers but the Philippine Coconut Federation (Cocofed), chaired by Maria Clara Lobregat and believed to be aligned with Cojuangco, wanted to have a "guaranteed percentage," Gonzales said.

"The government's position is that there should be no guarantee of percentage to any group. All farmers' groups should be equal before the trust fund. Your program should be approved on the basis of merit, not on the basis of being entitled to it," he explained.

"It's a merit system that the government wants, and personally, I go along with that. I think Danding has to agree with that," he said.

Gonzales said that what was happening was that the farmers, "the majority of the peasant groups involved in the coconut industry," had decided to consult with the bishops.

The bishops helped the farmers and Cojuangco come to terms. But these are the farmers' groups which had been supportive of a coconut levy settlement with Cojuangco from the start, according to Gonzales.

No discussion with boss

Believe it or not, Gonzales claimed that he had not talked to the President about the coco levy settlement.

"I have never talked to the President about the coco levy," Gonzales said.

Asked why he was not telling the President about the deal when he was a presidential adviser, he replied: "Why will I discuss this with the President? There's no way."

"Maybe in the future, I will because it has reached a point wherein the peasant movement, some bishops and Danding's group and (Maria Clara) Lobregat's group have come out with a common position," Gonzales said.

He said that these groups wanted a settlement and were bringing this to the President.

He said he would talk to the President about the settlement, on behalf of the farmers, at the proper time.

"I will be happy to do it sometime soon. Why will you allow P57 billion to remain unutilized especially today when we need money?" he said.

Low-key brother

He denied that the President's brother, Diosdado Jr., was involved in any deal on the coco levy, or that he was angling for commissions.

"Have you met the President's brother? He is one of the most simple, the most, you know, very, very low-key person. I don't think he would (do that)," Gonzales said.

Gonzales believed that Gen. Virgilio David, a former Philippine Coconut Authority administrator, was opposing the deal between the farmers and Cojuangco because he would be left out in the cold.

"The guy wants a commission. He started the coco levy problem. Suddenly if there's a settlement today, he's out," Gonzales said.

"I think he belongs to a group seeking a commission. Suddenly, it will not have any today," the presidential adviser said.

Asked if he was the President's favorite adviser, Gonzales said, "Honestly speaking, with this President, there's no favorite adviser, there's no influential adviser."

"I think, depending on the need, depending on the particular issue, sometimes you become the man of the hour because the issue happens to be your field," he said.

He said his position could be "very powerful" in the sense that he could be asked to be involved in any field or "special concern."

"It can also be so useless," he added.

As an adviser, Gonzales wants be behind the scenes. "That's how I wanted to be all the time," he told the INQUIRER.

"The only reason I want to be behind the scenes is because I don't want my decisions to be affected by interviews like yours. I'm not for the newspapers or the limelight or anything. I just want to do my job," Gonzales explained in another interview Wednesday night before Dante Ang came out in the open.

Gonzales said that this was his first interview.

He said he and Ang, the President's private publicist, wanted to free the P57-billion fund so the coconut farmers can use the money now.

'Influential? Who, me?'

(From page A1)

contract" that the government awarded either to him or his company.

Ang also turned the tables on the INQUIRER, saying it had received a contract from the Department of Transportation and Communication to distribute the tabloid INQUIRER Libre to MRT and LRT commuters.

"Why the INQUIRER? Why not . . . the other papers? Does that make PDI influential with the government?" Ang asked in a telephone interview.

"Dante Ang has not asked (for) any contract or caused the government to sign any contract for himself or his company. Does that make Dante Ang less influential?" he added.

INQUIRER Libre is a bilingual tabloid distributed for free.

Widely acknowledged to be "one of the most influential persons" in the Macapagal administration, Ang is not a Cabinet official and does not receive a salary as Ms Macapagal's publicist.

But he is known to perform functions with "official implications," the most recent of which was his presence at the Sept. 27 meeting between coconut farmers and businessman Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco in Davao City.

Ang said he was there as an "independent observer" and had never "thought of myself as the President's publicist when I went up the stage to translate the draft agreement (into other languages)."

"Why should I relay to the President what had transpired? I am not under her payroll," he said.

Psychic happiness

Ang admitted his closeness to the President. "She calls me, I can call her. Knowing that my neighbor knows that the President calls me is enough; that's my psychic happiness," he said.

"But I seldom go to Malacañang, not even for functions. She listens to other ideas. She has a mind of her own," Ang maintained.

He said he would rather stay at home.

Home is a 2,000-sqm house in Las Piñas City, surrounded by dogs and birds.

"I live in a zoo," he said. He keeps 15 dogs, including a St. Bernard. He also maintains a 10-foot-tall aviary and owns 14 horses at a ranch in Batangas.

The President's image-maker moves around Metro Manila in either a Porsche or a BMW. He owns 15 luxury cars.

A native of Las Piñas, the 59-year-old Ang would have been press secretary had not civil society objected.

He was reportedly the first choice of Diosdado Macapagal Jr., the President's brother, who knew Ang as Ms Macapagal's media handler from her days in the Senate.

As the President's publicist, however, Ang is like a "shadow press secretary" who generously offers media and other personalities directorships in government-owned corporations.

He confirmed having had a hand in the appointment of several journalists to board seats in government-owned corporations.

"They were appointed to be the government watchdogs. There is no intention to influence their writing," he explained.

In Ms Macapagal's working visit to the United States last month, Ang invited publishers, editors and columnists—and their respective spouses—to join the President's entourage. "He said he would take care of my expenses. *Gagawan daw nang paraan* (He'll find a way to pay for them)," Malaya columnist Ellen Tordesillas said. She rejected Ang's offer.

Gloria's Kokoy

Observers of the President's US working visit were reminded of the Marcos era when members of media were hauled to the United States to project a good image of then President Ferdinand Marcos.

It was the job of Benjamin "Kokoy" Romualdez, Imelda Marcos' younger brother who was publisher of the Times Journal and Philippine Ambassador to Washington, to invite the media to the free trips.

Sources said about 70 press people were accredited to join the Nov. 15-20 working visit. Plane fare and pocket money were estimated at P40 million for the media alone.

Ang objected to the comparison that he has become the Kokoy Romualdez of the Macapagal administration.

"That is not fair. Kokoy got himself appointed as ambassador. I have not accepted a position in government, except as director of RPN 9," he said.

Ang is actually board chair of RPN 9, the government-sequestered broadcast network. As recently as Sept. 11, he was also a director of the government's cash cow, the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp.

Ang said he bought the Manila Times for P20 million with his own money, unlike Romualdez who used government funds to put up the Journal.

Recently, Ang also bought the printing press and the industrial generators of the defunct Manila Chronicle for P5 million.

A son of a Chinese father and a Filipino mother, Dante Arevalo Ang said the Manila Times had "sentimental value" for him. His maternal grandfather, he said, worked at the Manila Times as a linotypist. "I used to go there in the '50s to ask for money from my *lolo*," he said.

He worked as a radio talent but made his first million as account executive with the KBS network owned by Roberto Benedicto.

He shifted to public relations in the '80s, and developed a clientele that included the late Speaker Ramon Mitra. He was asked by Ms Macapagal to be her publicist in the early '90s.

Ang said his relationship with the President was based on friendship. "It's like a friend that you consult. Does that make you influential over that friend?" he asked.

HK maids protest cuts in minimum wage

(From page A1)

During the Asian economic crisis in 1999, the HK$3,860 (US$495) minimum wage for foreign domestic helpers was cut by 5 percent. Their basic pay has been frozen since.

"I think it is a discriminatory move. They will be killing us softly," said Dina Calopez, a Filipino nutritionist who has worked as a maid in Hong Kong for seven years.

"If they lower our wages any further, there will be nothing left for us. We have to spend money to survive in Hong Kong and send it back to the Philippines, we just can't manage," Calopez added.

Annual review

Fanny Law, secretary for education and manpower, last month told reporters that the government was reviewing the salaries of domestic helpers.

Law said salaries would be reduced if there were a general drop in pay levels in Hong Kong.

She said the results of the review would be announced early next year.

The pay cut proposed by the Employers of Overseas Domestic Helpers' Association has generated an appeal from Philippine President Macapagal-Arroyo, whose country relies heavily on the income sent home by Filipino domestic helpers in Hong Kong.

According to Hong Kong's immigration department figures, the territory has 216,790 foreign domestic helpers, of which around 70 percent are from the Philippines.

Earlier this week, former Philippine President Fidel Ramos also voiced concerns over the proposed pay cut.

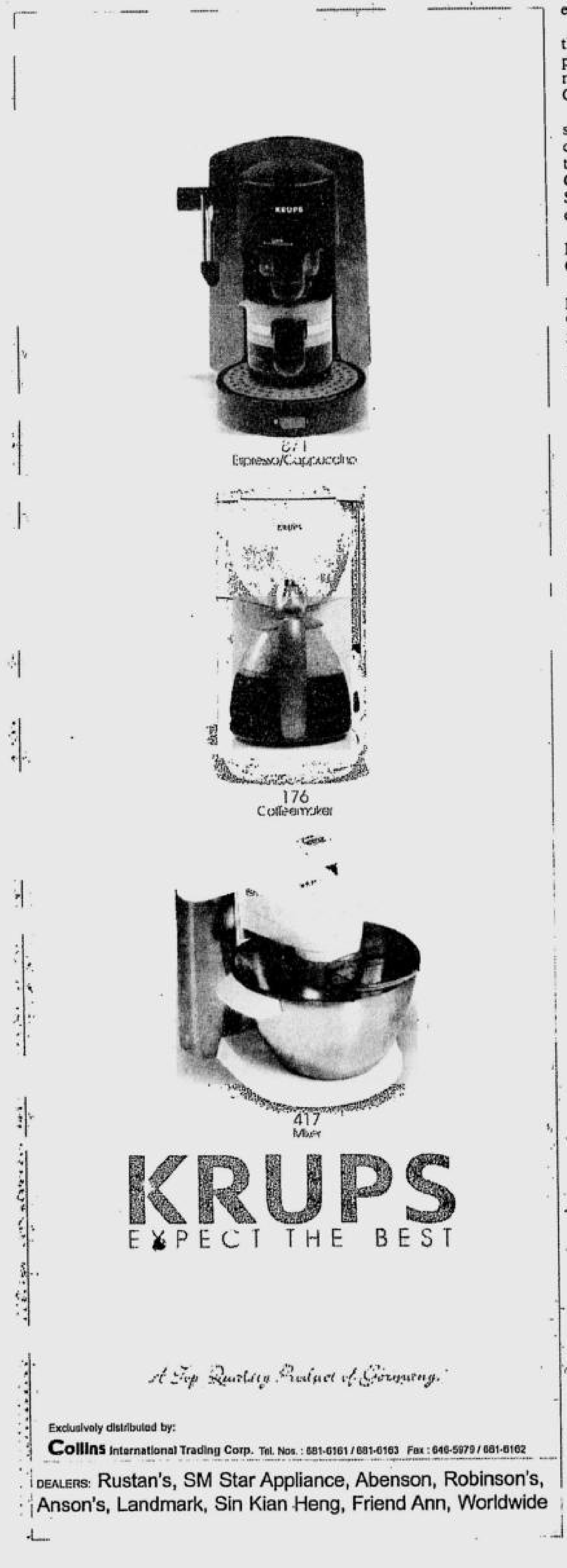
"The reduction of the minimum wage for foreign workers would also put more pressure on low waged Chinese or Hong Kong people in similar jobs and create more unemployment," he told an audience at Hong Kong's Foreign Correspondents' Club.

The maids said they feared a cut could reduce their minimum salaries to the 1991 level of HK$3,200 (US$410).

Despite the legal minimum wage set by contracts, many domestic helpers who don't speak English or Chinese get as little as HK$1,800 (US$230) a month, said Eni Lestari, chair of the Association of Indonesian Migrant Workers.

Some domestic helpers said they would leave Hong Kong if wages dropped to levels comparable to those at home.

Maria Teresa Castro, a domestic helper from Iloilo City, said a wage cut would severely undermine her ability to support her family. She sends HK$2,000 (US$256) every month—more than half her monthly salary. ***Reports from AP, AFP and Reuters***



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Prober chides Serge on ransom disclosure

(From page A1)

asked Osmeña to fully disclose what he knew about the supposed P17-million ransom.

The catch, however, is that the Palace will, in turn, order the military—which had been earlier accused of taking a cut from the ransom money—to investigate Osmeña's information.

"If he has information, we suggest that Senator Osmeña disclose it and the military could investigate it," Tiglao told reporters in a teleconference call.

Senate hearing

"(Osmeña) should have spoken up earlier on during the Senate hearing," Gunigundo said, referring to the inquiry conducted by the Senate national defense committee chaired by Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr. "He could have helped the Senate inquiry."

Zamboanga City Rep. Celso Lobregat said Osmeña should shed light on his allegations about the ransom payment.

Lobregat said in a phone interview that Osmeña's statement confirmed the public perception that ransom was indeed paid by hostages to the Abu Sayyaf.

While the government has a "no-ransom policy," he said some families of hostages would pay the kidnappers. "This becomes a dilemma for the government."

In a separate phone interview, Gunigundo said the House committee on national defense was set to issue its report.

Gunigundo, who chairs the nine-member technical working committee drafting the Lamitan report, refused to divulge the contents of the report or comment on whether Osmeña's revelations would affect it.

"But one of the issues discussed in the report dealt with whether or not it was practical to maintain the government's no-ransom policy," Gunigundo said.

He said the report was lengthy, possibly reaching a hundred pages.

"It will definitely catch the attention of the media the moment it is reported," Gunigundo said.

The report would be made final this Wednesday and would be released next week, he added.

No ransom

On Saturday, Osmeña claimed that he had helped facilitate the ransom payment. "I know ransom was paid by Reghis Romero because (the government) used my help in paying the ransom," he told the INQUIRER in Bacolod City.

But Tiglao yesterday said, "we're not aware of any ransom having been delivered by Mr. Romero's family."

During the siege of the Lamitan hospital, Romero, his friend Ma. Rhizza Santos and 9-year-old RJ Recio reportedly escaped from the Abu Sayyaf bandits holding them hostage.

But Lamitan residents led by parish priest Cirilo Nacorda charged that the military accepted payment from the Abu Sayyaf to allow the bandits to slip out of the town's church and hospital complex.

To date, none of the legislative committees have reported their findings.

Osmeña also said President Macapagal-Arroyo was too dependent on the military because her continued stay in power depended on its support.

Tiglao took strong exception to this statement.

"That's an insult to our military which has done everything it can to annihilate the Abu Sayyaf group and to recover the hostages," he said.

He said the only reasons that the military could not yet finish off the bandit group were the "difficult terrain and the guerrilla tactics of the Abu Sayyaf."

He pointed out that of the 20 hostages abducted from the luxurious Dos Palmas Resort in Palawan on May 27, the military has recovered all but two—the Americans Martin and Gracia Burnham.

There is a third hostage still in the bandits' hands—Filipino nurse Deborah Yap, who was abducted from Lamitan on June 2.

"They are holding only three people and it is easy (for the bandits) to hide them," Tiglao said.

The government aims to resolve the Abu Sayyaf problem before the year ends, he added.

Hussin, Mutilan set to be proclaimed today

(From page A1)

jamin Loong, who had 157,996 votes.

The figures represented ballots from Sulu, Basilan, Maguindanao and Tawi-Tawi. The Comelec regional board of canvassers was expecting the final tally from Lanao del Sur last night.

Paglas has accused Hussin, a member of the 15-member council of the Moro National Liberation Front, of buying votes long before the Nov. 26 elections.

In several precincts in Basilan, Sulu and Lanao del Sur, the board of election inspectors had uncovered ballots that were already filled up with Hussin's name. The Comelec was investigating the incident.

Hussin has vehemently denied the charges but admitted that he could not attest for people associated with his camp. He said he "does not have control over other people."

"How can someone who does not have money buy votes?" Hussin said in an earlier interview with the INQUIRER.

Veteran lawmakers

In Maguindanao, lawyer Lentang Bedol, chair of the provincial board of canvassers, proclaimed on Friday neophytes in the RLA but veterans in lawmaking.

"The canvassing went on smoothly and we had no difficulties because everybody cooperated," Bedol said of the canvassing held at the RLA session hall in Cotabato City.

About 400 soldiers and policemen secured the place. "We were well-guarded," Bedol said.

Jackson Bandila, a businessman, won the first seat in Maguindanao's first district with 67,664 votes. Following him was former Assemblyman Ibrahim Ibay, who got 64,154 votes.

The third congressional seat went to lawyer Tommy Ala, who got 36,886 votes. Ala served as the RLA secretary general and chief of staff of former ARMM Vice Governor Guimid Matalam.

Now a congressman representing the second district of Maguindanao, Matalam served as the second RLA speaker.

In the second district of Maguindanao, first-time Assemblyman Ombra Datumanong topped the race with 114,445 votes, followed by former Mayor Puwa Mangudadatu, 104,304; and Suharto Midtimbang, 103,033.

Datumanong is the younger brother of Public Works Secretary Simeon Datumanong. A veteran provincial lawmaker, Ombra served as Datumanong's chief of staff during his three-term as representative of Maguindanao's second district.

In the lone district of Tawi-Tawi, the canvassers proclaimed former Assemblywoman Ruby Sahali, Anwar Abubakar and former RLA Speaker Ismael Pochong Abubakar.

In Sulu, the board proclaimed Garcia Tingkahan, who got 27,007 votes; Abraham Burahan, 23,759; and Kabir Hayudini, 19,088 as representatives of the first district.

In the second district, it proclaimed Rouhulla Abdulradjak, who got 30,573 votes; Maulana Omar, 27,060; and Juliet Tammang, 24,391.

Speakership race

The choices for the next RLA speaker, the third highest official in the region, have been narrowed down to two—Maguindanao Assemblyman-elect Ombra Datumanong and Tawi-Tawi Assemblyman Ismael Abubakar.

"The election was abnormally peaceful," Fr. Eliseo Mercado Jr., Namfrel chair in the ARMM, told Notre Dame Broadcasting Corp. He noted that previous ARMM polls were always marred with violence that claimed lives of civilians.

Mercado served as Namfrel official in all four ARMM elections and this year's plebiscite expanding the region. "We had just concluded the most peaceful elections, we are happy to report this," Brig. Gen. Roy Kyamko, 6th Infantry Division chief, said.

"No one was killed in election-related violence," said Maj. Julieto Ando, ID spokesperson, although he admitted that some harassment, bombing and explosions occurred.

Mercado said it was time to move on and normalize the expanded ARMM, which is now composed of Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, Basilan and Marawi City.

"Put in place the leadership in ARMM. Let' move on," he said.

Reforms

He said the ARMM was experiencing a hiatus, citing recent developments in Sulu, Zamboanga and the present ARMM leadership.

Nur Misuari has abandoned his post as the region's chief executive. Late last month, his followers launched attacks against government forces in Sulu.

"What is important is we, the government, Namfrel, Comelec and elected officials, initiate appropriate reforms (in our electoral system)," he added.

Pushing Namfrel's suggestions to improve the balloting not only in the ARMM polls but also throughout the country, Mercado said, "we look forward to a better, credible and orderly elections in 2004 where the country holds presidential elections."

Mercado, who also chairs the Kusong Mindanao, a leading peace advocacy group on the island, said the national government should refrain from "imposing" on the ARMM.

"What kind of autonomy it would be if we will have the process of choosing, anointing and running the affairs of the region copied from the national capital?" he asked.

In an interview last week, Hussin, whose council ousted Misuari from the MNLF and replaced him as head, said he would not make the same mistakes that led to Misuari's downfall.

Unlike Misuari, who "spent most of his time somewhere else instead of his homeland," Hussin said he would actually govern the ARMM's "neglected provinces."

He said he would not implement "very ambitious projects," like the 10-lane highways that Misuari had wanted to build in Jolo.

"I'm not crazy like that (Misuari)," Hussin said, adding he expected support from Malacañang for economic reforms in the region.

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Roela C. Castro
Larry C. Cristobal
Nerisa Marasigan
Marijoy R. Nacuray
Janet P. Oliverio
Dennis T. San Juan

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Annabelle M. Mora
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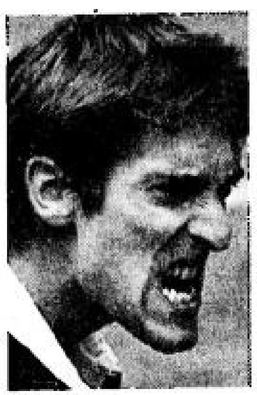
France wins Davis Cup

Escude keys 3-2 victory over Australia



ESCUDE

MELBOURNE, Australia—Nicolas Escude gave France its ninth Davis Cup on Sunday, defeating Australian Wayne Arthurs 7-6 (3), 6-7 (5), 6-3, 6-3 in the deciding fifth match after Pat Rafter was a late injury pullout.

Escude's win—his second of the weekend—came four hours after Rafter, fighting tendinitis in his right arm, had to withdraw after playing both previous days in the final, a singles match that he won Friday and in doubles Saturday.

Earlier Sunday, Lleyton Hewitt sent the final to a decider with a 6-3, 6-2, 6-3 win over France's Sebastien Grosjean.

Australian captain John Fitzgerald decided on Saturday to scrap the scheduled doubles pairing of Todd Woodbridge and Arthurs in favor of Rafter and Hewitt.

The move backfired when Australia lost in the doubles—giving France a 2-1 lead—and came back to haunt Fitzgerald again on Sunday when Rafter said he was too sore to play in the deciding fifth match.

That left Arthurs, who is ranked 64th in the world in singles and had not played a singles match since the end of October, to carry Australia's hopes in the decider.

Arthurs had lost to the 27th-ranked Escude in their only previous meeting while Rafter had a 4-0 record against the Frenchman.

Earlier in the week when speculation mounted that Rafter might have to pull out of the weekend final, French captain Guy Forget said that even an "80-percent fit" Rafter was better than Arthurs.

But on Sunday, Rafter thought he was less than a 50-50 chance to win.

"I knew I had only one match left in me before the doubles, so we thought that we should go for it and see if we can knock it off," Rafter said. "It was a risk we had to take and it didn't come off."

Hewitt said the Australian team knew that Rafter was a big question mark.

"It has been a touch-and-go thing for the last two or three weeks," said Hewitt. "It was never a certainty whether he was going to be out on the court on Day 1 either.

"We took the risk that he was able to put in one exceptional match, but it obviously took a lot out of him."

The win helped avenge a French loss in the final in Nice two years ago and marked the second straight year that Australia has lost in the final, having been defeated by Spain last year in Barcelona.

The first set of the decider went on to serve through to the tiebreaker, with the only drama for Arthurs coming when he had to fight off three break points in the sixth game. *AP*

TEAMMATES give Escude a victory lift after his 7-6 (3), 6-7 (5), 6-3, 6-3 win over Arthurs that gave France a 3-2 win over Australia. AP

Elma fan captures 1st gold

By Marc Anthony Reyes

FARNACIO

BACOLOD CITY—Jona Farnacio, a barefooted 10-year-old first-timer from Pozzorubio, Pangasinan and who idolizes Elma Muros-Posadas, captured the first gold medal in the Philippine National Youth Games-Batang Pinoy yesterday at the Panaad Sports Complex here.

The tall, lean and dusky Farnacio leaped to her personal best mark of 4.13 meters in her second attempt to edge her rivals in the girls long jump at the start of the track and field competitions.

Twelve-year-old Rommel Fuene of host Bacolod City took the boys shot put gold after hurling the metal ball to 11.57 meters, surpassing the previous record of 11.19 meters set by Iskak Mashod of Maguindanao.

Farmers' son

A Grade 6 student at the Education Training center School, Fuene is the only son of farmers Sulpicio and Clarita.

Farnacio, fourth in the brood of six by tricycle driver Antonio and homemaker Erlinda, is the reigning champion in long jump, hurdles, 400m, 800m and 1,500m during the Pangasinan Division II competitions this year.

"I know I can do even better," said the 5-foot-2 Farnacio of her feat, which was .28 meter short of the record. "But I'm still very happy having been the first gold medalist in this meet."

Her coach Federico Bautista Jr. said they are expecting more medals from Farnacio, whose dream is to follow the footsteps of track superstar Muros.

"She's still very young and tall for her age," said Bautista of his ward, who despite not being used to wearing shoes, already has long, upright strides that set her apart from the rest.

"And besides, we don't have the money to buy shoes, anyway," said Farnacio, who is now Grade 5 at the Don Domingo Magno Elementary School.

Meanwhile, former Asia's sprint queen Lydia de Vega-Mercado lamented the lack of follow-up program for Batang Pinoy discoveries and stressed the need for a year-long nationwide program to harness talents for international competitions.

Shabby treatment

Mercado also protested the shabby treatment she got from the Philippine Sports Commission which initially decided to send her here by ship and billet her in an elementary school campus just like the rest of the participants.

Fortunately, PSC commissioner Butch Ramirez saved her from embarrassment by buying her plane tickets and booking her to a hotel. De Vega-Mercado is PSC consultant for track and field.

PSC commissioner Weena Lim said she was totally unaware that De Vega-Mercado was coming because she was part of the technical officials' delegation.

Lim said that as soon as she was informed of De Vega-Mercado's plight, she invited her to the hotel where the PSC officials are billeted.

"She (De Vega-Mercado) doesn't deserve that treatment because she's everybody's idol," said Lim, who is the project director of the Games. "It was very unfortunate that such things happened because of miscommunications."

9th-seeded Swede Tru-flex netfest champ

NINTH seed Daniel Andersson of Sweden outplayed qualifier Kim Dong-Hyun of Korea, 6-2, 6-1, yesterday to snare the men's singles crown of the US$15,000 Tru-flex ITF Philippines Men's Futures 1 a the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center.

Andersson, ranked No. 384 in the world, banked on his solid backhand to win his first tournament in Asia.

"I played great today. All my shots were good," said the 24-year-old baseliner from Stockholm. He earned US$1,950 and 12 ATP points.

"Hopefully, I can keep my level of performance in the second leg," added Andersson, singles champion in Florida and California Futures early this year. He also won in Jamaica last year.

Fatigue caught up with Kim, who was playing in his fourth straight tournament, including two in Thailand where he reached the finals of the first leg.

"I'm so tired," said Kim, who settled for US$1,350. He won a Futures in Chinese Taipei last June.

Meanwhile, top seed Febi Widhiyanto of Indonesia defeated Ata Khatib Great Britain, 6-2, 6-3 and No. 2 Igor Levine won over Marc Paulik of New Zealand, 6-4, 4-0 (ret.) to reach the second-round qualifying in this event supported by the ITF Grand Slam Development Fund, Tru-flex Tennis Court Surfacing, PSC, Viva Mineral Water, Manila Midtown Hotel and official ball Wilson. *AP*

Mica's Magic steals thunder

By Edwin Villanueva

JAVIER

MICA's Magic could have been entered in the Dec. 9 sweepstakes race but owner Sandy Javier has another thing in mind for the promising bay filly.

Instead, the sportsman-businessman of Andok's fame opted to register her in the Hopeful Juvenile yesterday and the move paid off handsomely.

Sent away as just the third choice in the 12-horse field, Mica's Magic blew past the leaders in the middle of the stretch to register a two-length victory in the one mile event at the Santa Ana Park.

"*Sa* Dec. 9 sweepstakes *sana siya itatakbo* but we found out she can't adjust well at San Lazaro so we decided to run her at Santa Ana for the Hopeful Juvenile," said Javier, who also lauded James Saguiped Jr. for assisting him in conditioning Mica's Magic.

Javier named Mica's Magic (Lioubovnik-Sharika) after her youngest daughter, Mica Cecille.

Riding Mica's Magic to victory was Val Dilema, who showed fans his patented raise-the-roof gesture as Mica's Magic crossed the wire.

Meanwhile, Golden Ballet tallied her sixth consecutive victory after edging longshot Art of Rose in the Juvenile Championship.

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What's with the POC?

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

THE RECENT general assembly of the Philippine Olympic Committee was a big letdown insofar as officials of several National Sports Associations are concerned: it failed to resolve their long-drawn leadership problems, raising more questions than answers and succeeded only in prolonging the agony and indignation not only of the NSA leaders involved but other members of the POC as well.

"We came to the assembly expecting an end to the crisis and hoping to be enlightened by POC president Celso Dayrit on some issues, particularly his questionable communication with the international cycling body," an NSA member said, "but the assembly came out short in resolving the disputes. *Walang ginawa ang* POC leadership *kundi ibalik sa* association *yung problema. Para ano pa at nandoon sila?*"

As a result, the in-fighting and bickering in cycling, karatedo and weightlifting remain the same, leaving these NSAs in disarray and their athletes more confused and demoralized in their training for next year's Asian Games. Several NSA officers blamed POC arbitration committee head Claudio Altura of sailing for his failure to use his resources and weigh the documents presented by the aggrieved parties, stressing that the committee did not move fast enough to plug the hole and prevent the ship from sinking deeper into troubled waters.

In the case of cycling, sports leaders asked why Dayrit issued a statement to an official of UCI (International Cycling Federation) saying that the contending parties in cycling—Danao Mayor Ramonito Durano and Ponciano Regalado—have already entered into an agreement, which Durano denied in a sworn affidavit.

"All we want is for the POC leadership to explain its claims to the international cycling federation," an insider said, adding that it was the Regalado group who urged track and field president Go Teng Kok to help them arrange a meeting with Durano's camp to discuss the issues confronting the cycling association. "*Ano ang gagawin ko? Sila ang lumapit sa akin at humingi ng tulong dahil gusto nilang magka-ayos kaya gusto ko rin silang tulungan, masama ba iyon?*" Go asked. In the same assembly, Go, a staunch critic of the POC president, failed to raise several issues on the floor still, "*Okey lang kay* Mr. Go," an observer said. "*Dahil mismong si* Mr. Aventajado (POC chair Robert Aventajado, who presided over the meeting), *ay nagsabi sa kanya na iyong mga* NSAs *na may problema muna ang magsasalita.*" Also in the same assembly, Freddie Jalasco, deposed president of the Basketball Association of the Philippines, was told to shut up and ordered out of order by Aventajado after Jalasco linked Go to convicted drug queen Yu Yuk Lai, but before Go could react Aventajado was able to control the unsettling situation.

* * *

FROM THE MAILBAG. Lawyer Atlee Viray of San Fernando City Pampanga wrote us a letter in response to my previous columns. Here's Mr. Viray:

"I agree that our common friends, Jun and Rody Jingco, are the pride of Pampanga. Jun and Rudy have an enviable track record as breeders of champions. Jun is a perfect gentleman who has walked with the rich and famous but has not lost the common touch. Rudy is the more gregarious type who is a friend to all cockers. Jun and Rudy exemplify the best among cockers who are not gamblers.

"I also feel sad for the slow grind of justice. I can feel your pain as you recount the death of your son, Carlo. As a lawyer, I am doubly sad to see the plight of litigants in our courts. Even granting the police is able to apprehend the suspects, a litigation in court may take some time. I can only wish you the best in the years to come."

Cavite derby today

NATIONAL and world cockfight champions collide in the much-awaited Cavite 7-Cock International derby at Cavite Coliseum today starting at 6 p.m.

More than 100 fights are on tap in the event.

The semifinals is on Dec. 5, while the finals is on Dec. 7.

To host the fund-raising sports affair supported by Pagcor-Casino Filipino, Sagupaan Super Feeds and Calf-Manna concentrated ration are Sen. Ramon Revilla and lawyer Rudy Salud.

Fans will also be treated to other interesting gaming activities like slot machines to be provided by Pagcor-Casino Filipino.

The early favorites include Saipan Rep. Benjamin Sablan, Riyochi Saito of Japan, Gov. John Tenorio of Guam, Mr. Li Ong of Malaysia (supported by Boy Primalion), Conrad Burgos of San Diego California and Fil-Am cocker Richard Bates among others.

Interested parties may contact Ferdie Bautista at 0919-3472192 or (02)-5526724 or Cavite Coliseum at (046)-9709971 and 9704811.

52ND EDITION

Fil-Am golfest blasts off today

QUE

BAGUIO CITY—The Fil-Am tournament, one of the nation's oldest and one of the world's biggest in point of participants, reels off today at the Baguio Country Club and John Hay Golf club courses.

An international field of 690 players from 69 teams is competing in the six-day event starting at 6 a.m. simultaneously at the first and 10th tees of both clubs.

Hitting of the traditional ceremonial drives at 8 a.m. yesterday—first at John Hay's 15th tee then at the Country Club's 10th—officially kicked off the 52nd edition of the tournament.

Those who did the honors were Benguet Gov. Raul Molintas, Rep. Mauricio Domogan, Baguio Mayor Bernardo Vergara, lawyer Damaso Bangaoet, BCDA chair Babes Singson, Bjorn Anderson, John Hay chairman, Robert John L. Sobrepeña, Country Club chair Federico Agcaoili, Miguel Rodrigo of Sony-Ericsson and Smart's Greg Atienza.

Up for grabs in the event sponsored by Sony-Ericsson, Smart, College Assurance Plan and John Hay Poro Point Development Corp. are team and individual trophies in the Championship Flight and Flights A, B, C, D, E and F in the Fil and Am divisions.

Competition for today and tomorrow will be on Flights, C, D, E and F at both clubs. Then Manila Southwoods defense of the Fil division's Championship Flight Wednesday, Dec. 5.

CAP-Manila Southwoods heads an international field of 69 clubs, 21 of them coming from other parts of the world including Australia, South Korea, Okinawa, Japan and the United States' California, Hawaii and Guam.

"This is it," said Fil-Am tournament overall coordinator Shean Bedi. "After all the preparation done at John Hay and the Country Club the past months, everything is finally all set.

"And if John Hay is ready, so are we," said Country Club general manager Anthony de Leon. "We have prepared our course for weeks.

And CAP-Manila Southwoods team manager Jeric Hechanova agrees.

"John Hay is a lot longer, but it would be tougher to score at the Country Club," he said. "And the main reason for this is those six part three holes.

"'These short holes require right club selection, not to mention accuracy. If you go over the greens, it would be very tough hitting your second shots close.

The guys Hechanova referred to are reigning Philippine amateur champion Angelo Que, former champion Artemio Murakami, Jerome Delariarte, Jun Jun Plana and rookie Erwin Vinluan.

Expected to provide the challenge to CAP-Manila Southwoods' bid for a third straight Championship Flight crown are Mizuno DHL, Forest Hills and Fairways and Blue Water.

As CAP-Manila Southwoods' main challenger, Mizuno DHL boasts of players with a combination of youth and experience. Emilio Tuason, the 1976 Philippine amateur champion, heads Mizuno's campaign.

Expected to support the comebacking Tuason are Marvin Dumandan, Gene Bondoc, Mario Labajo and reigning Uratex champion but rookie Jay Bayron of Davao City.

Dytoc vaults ahead in GameworX kegfest

NATIONAL mainstay Benny Dytoc tallied a two-day total of 3,334 pinfalls to grab the lead in the 2nd Pepsi-GameworX Tenpin Bowling Classic Tournament at the GameworX, StriXe fourth level of Festival Supermall, Filinvest Alabang Muntinlupa City.

Dytoc, representing Plydium, was in fourth spot in the opening day behind overnight leader and defending champion Angelo Constantino, who submitted 1,650 pinfalls in day two of the tournament that offers P50,000 worth of gift certificate to the winner.

Lippi Uy of Amba surprisingly took second spot with a 3,313 pinfalls, while Constantino slip to third spot with his 3,309 pinfalls.

Biboy Rivera of TBMA Prima dropped to fourth spot with 3,277 and Christian Navaro of AMBA remained in fifth with 3,273.

Other bowlers who made it to the top 10 after two days of competition were Amphel Alvarez of AMBA 3,210; Phillip Rellorti of MBA 3,208; Arianne Cerdena of GameworX 3,191 and Ginno Mansilungan 3,170 pinfalls.

Meanwhile, National player Irene Garcia Benitez representing Youngtown, was still straggling to her game at the 20th spot with 3,119 pinfalls, while Jojo Canare also from Youngtown was in the 30th spot with 3,088 and Jonnee Gatchalian was in the 35th spot with 3,068 pinfalls.

Mendoza-Manansala duo rules 'Bente Uno' meet

THE TANDEM of Chino Mendoza and Gerrard Manansala bannered the winners in the successful Burlington Bente Uno Challenge at the Southridge School, Alabang recently.

Other winners in the students division (high school) were Roy Macam and Victor Claridad and the duo of Gilbert Flor and Christian Villanueva. The challenge was also held at the Don Bosco Technical College in Mandaluyong City and at the Claret School QC.

San Juan's Aquinas School, Don Bosco Academy of Mabalacat, Pampanga and the Don Bosco Technical Institute of Tarlac City will next host the challenge which is primarily sponsored by Burlington, maker of sports and quality performance socks.

Those interested to join can get in touch Dexter Araquel of the Pro-Aide Inc—The Sports and Management Specialist with tel nos:781-1640.

The complete list of winners: Bong Berbeno/Lawrence Tumlos, Chito Manuel/Jun Laquim, Mikey Morado/Justin Zialcita, Carlo Eriko Cruz/Nak Bowie Santiago, John Eusebio/Christian Villanueva, Arnold Capistrano/Mark Araniego and Carlos Arcangel/John Rivera.

Kevin and Shaq

NBA NOTES

Henry Liao

TWO players are bankrolling more than $20 million in salaries this season.

They are Minnesota forward Kevin Garnett and LA Lakers center Shaquille O'Neal. The 6-11, 25-year-old Garnett, who is in his seventh NBA season, is making $22.4 million with the Timberwolves. He is in the fourth year of a six-year, $126-million contract extension he inked with the Wolves in September 1997 that only took effect starting with the lockout-shortened 1998-99 campaign following the completion of his NBA-mandated three-year rookie deal out of prep school. KG's contract expires after the 2003-04 wars.

The 7-1, 29-year-old O'Neal, the Lakers captain with back-to-back NBA championship rings and NBA Finals MVP trophies, is receiving $21.43 million. He is in the sixth year of a 10-year, $208.4-million pact that includes the maximum three-year, $88.4-million extension he signed in October 2000. He originally hooked up with the Lakers in July 1996 on a seven-year, $120-million free-agent deal after four seasons with the Orlando Magic. Under the extension, which contains an early-termination clause after its second year, at O'Neal's option, Shaq will earn $26.5 million in 2003-04, $29.5 million in 2004-05 and $32.4 million in 2005-06.

So far, only one player has gotten $30 million or more in a season. Michael Jordan holds the highest salary in a single season in NBA history when he secured $33.14 million from the Chicago Bulls in 1997-98, the year before he went into retirement for a second time. The previous season (1996-97), MJ had set a record by getting $30.14 million from the Bulls.

This season, after a three-year sabbatical, the 38-year-old Jordan is making only $1 million, the NBA veteran minimum for players with at least 10 years of experience, with the salary-capped Washington Wizards.

Garnett is expected to become the second player to hit the $30 million plateau in the summer of 2004. O'Neal should follow suit the following year.

Miami's kidney-troubled center Alonzo Mourning is the league's third highest-paid player at $18.756 million. Dallas' underachieving forward ranks fourth at $18.750 million. Both Mourning and Howard own seven-year, $105-million pacts that expire after the 2002-03 season. Howard's accord as originally signed with the then-Washington Bullets in August 1996. The Mavericks acquired him from Washington last February.

Completing the NBA's 11 highest-salaried players this season are Portland's Scottie Pippen ($18.08 million), Utah's Karl Malone ($17.5 million—he recently requested for a trade, an option the aging Jazz are considering), Portland's Rasheed Wallace ($14.4 million), Philadelphia's Dikembe Mutombo ($14.315 million), Seattle's Gary Payton ($12.926 million), New York's Allan Houston ($12.75 million) and Sacramento's Chris Webber ($12.75 million).

Els hangs tough

SUN CITY, South Africa—An astonishing 61 for Ireland's Padraig Harrington was not enough to wrest the lead from South African Ernie Els in the third round of the $4.06-million Nedbank Golf Challenge on Saturday.

Harrington's impressive round on the 7,078-meter (7,715-yard) par-72 Gary Player Country Club made a par on the par-5 ninth seem odd.

His round was the best ever at the Sun City resort, but will not be a course record because players were allowed to place their balls on the fairways because the ground was wet.

Els went on a birdie spree of his own, taking a shot from par on each of the fifth to the 10th holes, tightening his grip on the tournament at 17-under-par 199 after three rounds.

Miñoza lands 18th

FRANKIE Miñoza double-bogeyed the first hole and never recovered, collapsing with a 74 and settled for a share of 18th place in the $732,000 JGTO Nippon Series JT Cup golf tournament at the par-70 Tokyo Yomiuri Country Club course.

Minoza finished with a 72-hole aggregate of 281, far behind the winning total of 268 posted by Katsumasa Miyamoto who fired a 66. Still, Minoza wound up with his best finish in the Order of Merit of 17th place.

In Hong Kong, Gerald Rosales soared to a 72 and placed 41st in the Omega Hong Kong Open with a 275 won by Jose Maria Olazabal of Spain .

Orlando prevails

WASHINGTON—Tracy McGrady rose to the occasion of his first test this season against Michael Jordan by scoring 26 points and forcing Jordan into an awful shooting game as the Orlando Magic beat the Wizards, 96-87.

COMPLETE results

Boston 105, New Jersey 98, OT; Toronto 104, Atlanta 103; Orlando 96, Washington 87; Cleveland 93, Charlotte 81; Detroit 100, New York 97; San Antonio 85, Houston 75; Philadelphia 93, Chicago 76; Indiana 100, Utah 97; Phoenix 97, Portland 83; Dallas 111, Golden State 82; LA Lakers 102, Minnesota 76. *AP*

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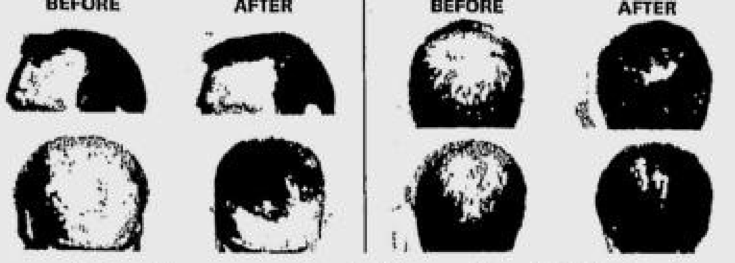

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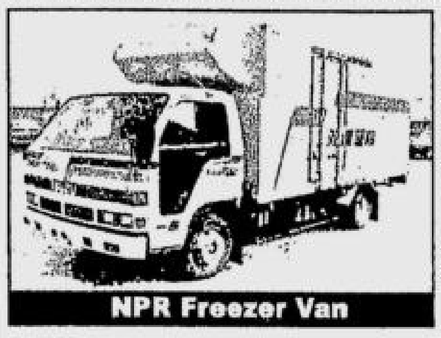

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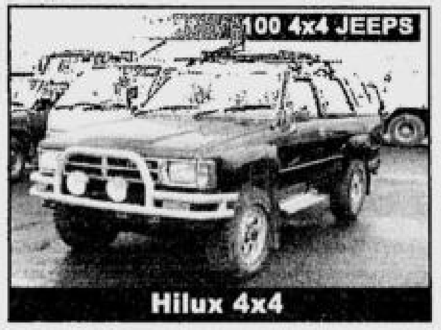

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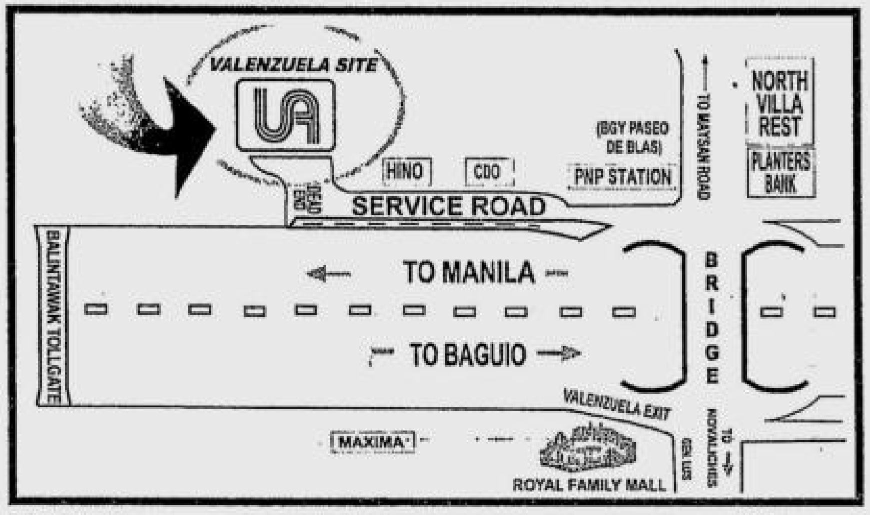

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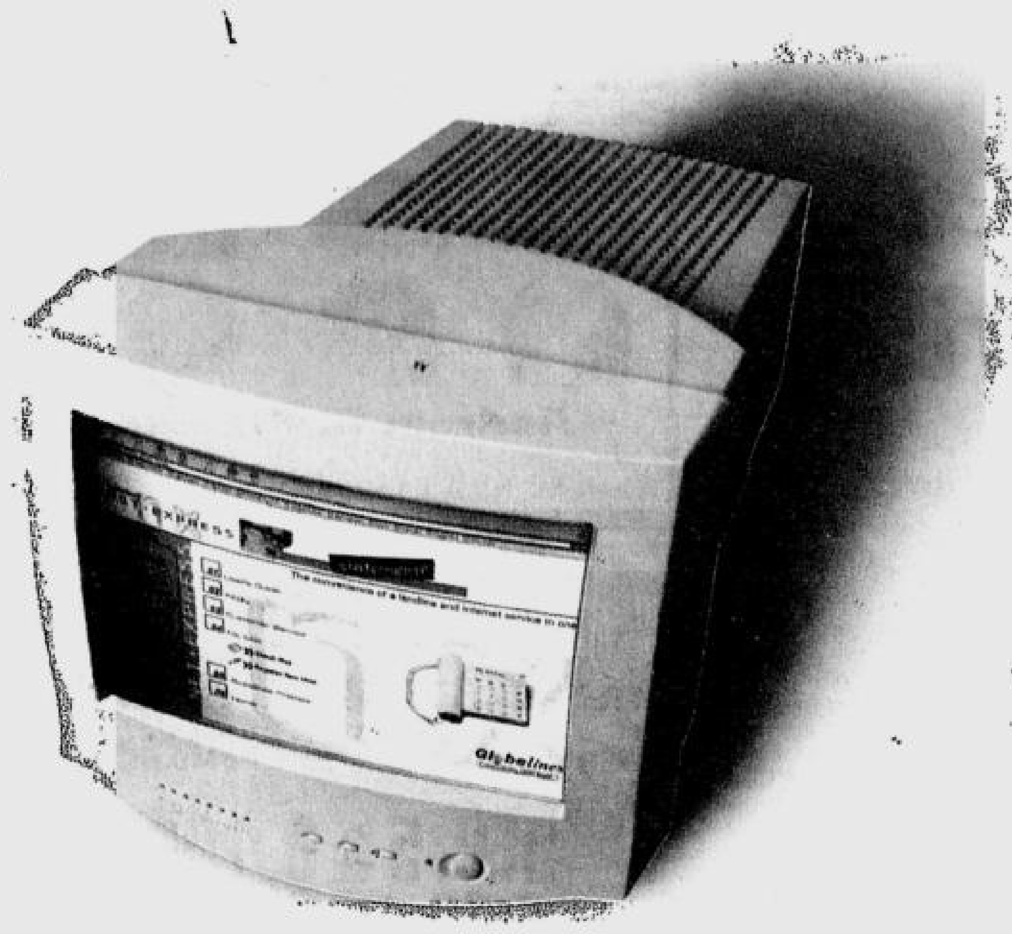

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SPORTS

AL S. MENDOZA, Editor
EDWIN M. VILLANUEVA, Assistant Editor

It's SLR against San Mig

GAMES WEDNESDAY
(Araneta Coliseum)
5:05 p.m.—Pop vs Shell
7:10 p.m.—SMB vs SLR

BY JUNE NAVARRO

MENDOZA

STA. LUCIA Realty devised an early assault and held its fort the rest of the way to eliminate Pop Cola, 86-74, and arrange a championship showdown against San Miguel Beer in the PBA Governors Cup at the Araneta Coliseum last night.

Paolo Mendoza and Marlou Aquino led a first quarter breakaway as the Realtors sustained huge margins for two quarters before Dennis Espino and Donbel Belano helped finish the Panthers off to put the lid on the semifinal duel which ended at 3-2.

It will be the Realtors' second finals' appearance since joining the league nine years ago.

Interestingly, the Realtors will plunge into the best-of-7 title series facing San Miguel Beer, the same team that beat them last year in the Commissioner's Cup.

"The locals stepped up, played with a lot of intensity and gave their share of contributions, that keyed the win," said Sta. Lucia coach Norman Black.

Damien Owens only had 10 points but hauled down 18 rebounds and issued 14 assists to score a triple-double.

Pop franchise

Whether Pop Cola's franchise in the PBA remains with the RFM Group of Companies will be known tonight when the League's Board of Governors convenes to decide on its transfer to San Miguel Corp.

Should the Board of Governors muster 6 out of the possible 9 votes or two-thirds aggregate, SMC will automatically own the Pop Cola franchise and increase its number of teams in the league to four.

Scores:

STA. LUCIA 86—Espino 23, Aquino 18, Francisco 12, Mendoza 12, Owens 10, Belano 6, Tan 5, Del Rosario 0.

POP COLA 74—Ellis 32, Hatfield 16, Juinio 12, Asaytono 5, Abarrientos 3, Antonio 2, Ballesteros 2, Morano 2, Bolado 0, Lastimosa 0.

Quarters: 31-15; 47-34; 62-52, 86-74.

Negros leads; Andok's alive

Games Wednesday
La Salle Lipa Sentrum
3 p.m.—LBC Batangas vs Andok's San Juan
USLS Bacolod City
5:30 p.m.—Negros vs Cebuana Lhuillier

DENNIS Madrid can be depended upon to deliver when needed.

Apart from orchestrating the plays, Madrid also carried the offensive load for Negros as the Slashers bested the Cebuana Lhuillier Gems, 94-86, and moved closer toward the Southern Conference crown in the MBA Second Phase at the Cebu City Coliseum.

Madrid pumped in 13 points, nine of them from the free throw line, in the last five minutes to give the Slashers their second straight victory after dropping the best-of-five series opener at the USLS Gym in Bacolod City.

The Slashers thus regained the homecourt edge, needing only to beat the Gems in Game Four also slated at the Cebu City Coliseum on Wednesday to enter the national finals against the winner of the Northern Conference.

Even if they lose, however, the Slashers have another chance as the best-of-five series would return to Bacolod for Game Five on Friday.

It was a brilliant comeback for the Slashers, who trailed by as many as 16 points, early in the third quarter. Cid White, however, sparked an uprising and they finally knotted the count at 71.

John Ferriols put the Slashers ahead with a jumper before Peter Naron forged the game's sixth and last deadlock at 73.

Despite failing to account for a basket in the homestretch, White was picked as the best player with his 18-point, 8-rebound, 2-assist, 1-steal output. Madrid shared scoring honors with 18.

Play was halted with 2 minutes and 36 seconds as fans pelted the court with mineral water plastic bottles after a technical foul was called on Cebu coach Tonichi Yturri for continuous complaining. It took appeals by cooler heads, particularly Cebu Vice Mayor Mike Rama to pacify the crowd.

Andok's San Juan downed LBC Batangas, 80-75, at the San Juan Gym to stay alive in the Northern Conference finals. The Blades are still ahead, 2-1, in the series and the Knights need to sweep the last two games at the La Salle Lipa Sentrum to keep their national title-retention drive going. *Roy Luarca*

Scores:

NEGROS 94—White 18, Madrid 18, Cardel 16, Hugnatan 11, Bat-og 9, Benedicto 8, Ferriols 6, Dela Rosa 4, Aldeguer 2, Ignacio 2, Tierra 0, Huelar 0.

CEBUANA LHUILLIER 86—Naron 16, Se 15, Santamaria 14, Padilla 13, Solis 12, Taguines 5, Jose 3, Sayon 2, De Jesus 2, Lura 2, Yu 2, Mejia 0,

Quarters: 23-24, 41-45, 64-68, 94-86.

SPORTS ON TV

COMPILED BY LORENZO MANGUIAT

BASKETBALL: US NCAA—TCU Horned Frogs vs Texas Tech Red Raiders at 6:30 a.m. and 2 p.m. (r) on ESPN

NBA - Dallas Mavericks vs Sacramento Kings at 10 a.m. (r – 8 p.m.) on Sky Cable and Home Cable Channel 29

Women's NCAA 2001—NC State vs Tennessee at 4 p.m. (r), Louisiana Tech vs Duke at 6 p.m. (r) on ESPN

TENNIS: Masters Series (Indian Wells) Highlights at 11 a.m. (r – 9 p.m.) on Star Sports

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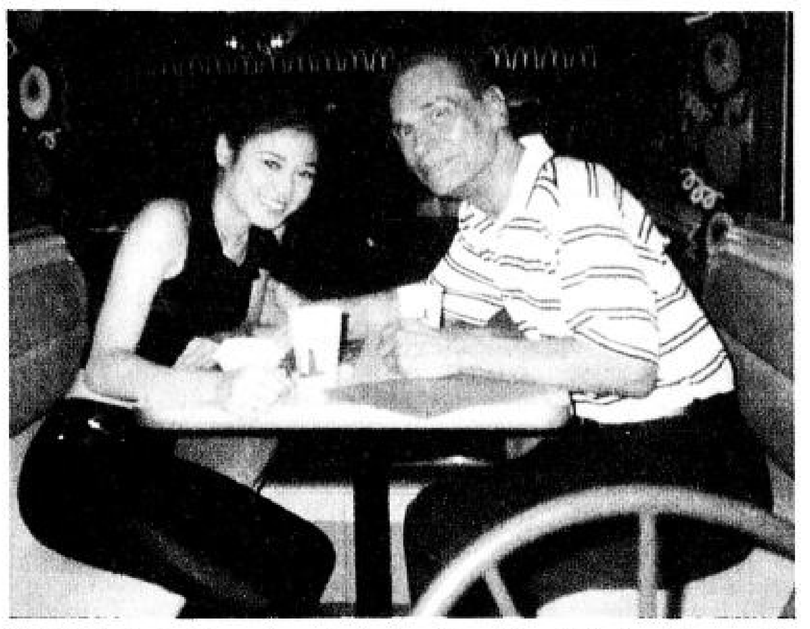

"LOLO" Rudy Francisco is joined by Glomi de los Reyes, his granddaughter Karen/Gina in the commercial.

Karen's 'lolo' made girls swoon as a '50s film heartthrob

By Leah Salterio

"SAAN ka ba galing, Gina?"

"Karen *po."*

The simple exchange has become part of current conversations these days, thanks to the heartwarming TV commercial which shows what seems to be a senile grandfather talking to a girl whom he insists on calling Gina when her name is Karen. The punchline comes after he wraps half his burger and says, to the girl's surprise, that it is his for favorite grandchild, Karen.

The short dialog has become an endless source of text jokes, TV spoofs, comic strips and even Sunday homilies.

The *lolo* in the TV commercial played his part so well you'd think

KAREN'S/ A26

FRANCISCO in the early '50s.

Witness scared by picture of Cinco suspect, cops say

By Philip C. Tubeza

PICTURES of one of the suspects in the killing of Commission on Elections director Velma Cinco helped a witness make a positive identification of the suspect as one of the two gunmen in the Cinco ambush.

Even though the suspect continued to elude arrest, he is now facing charges of murder and frustrated murder for Cinco's killing and the serious injury of Cinco's son Carlo.

Authorities failed to arrest the remaining suspect when they raided his house somewhere in Metro Manila, the source added.

But pictures of the suspect were found in his house and were shown to the witness in the killing.

The witness, the source said, positively identified the man in the pictures as one of two gunmen who ambushed and shot dead Cinco on Nov. 10 at the corner of Pedro Gil and Eden streets in Sta. Ana, Manila.

"We found some pictures of the suspect in his house and we showed it to the witness," the source said. "The witness even got frightened when he saw the picture."

One of the pictures showed the suspect in target shooting practice, the source said.

Charges would be filed against the suspect before the Department of Justice so that an arrest warrant could be issued against him.

"We want to have an arrest warrant against him so that we can nab him," the source said.

On Friday, Task Force C-5 (Comelec-Cinco) charged Conrado Robles with murder and frustrated murder for Cinco's killing and the injury of her son Carlo, according to Edmund Arugay, National Bureau of Investigation-National Capital Region unit chief.

Robles, 47, of Barangay Malakimpok, San Pascual, Batangas, was arrested Thursday near his home.

Robles was allegedly one of the two gunmen on board a motorcycle who ambushed and killed Cinco while she was on her way to work on board her red Kia Pride (TDR 779) with her son Carlso and sister Marian S. Jayme.

Robles, who was also positively identified by two witnesses as one of the two gunmen in the Cinco killing, was initially charged with illegal possession of firearms before the DOJ on Thursday night after he was allegedly found with an unlicensed .32 handgun.

The murder and frustrated murder charges were filed the following day.

Robles, said to be a former casual employee at the Comelec, claimed that a military man provided him with the documents for the handgun. He allegedly lost his job after Cinco took over the Comelec education and information department.

Authorities were also looking at the possibility that Cinco was killed because many casual employees were not retained when she became Comelec EID chief.

Earlier, authorities were exploring the alleged quarrel between Cinco and her predecessor Angelina Matibag as an angle in the killing.

Cinco died from four gunshot wounds in her head and body. She was 62.

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Espinosa takes an unfinished fight to Thailand

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

HE should've stopped fighting. Not only last year, but several years ago.

But despite the brutal nature of prizefighting, not to mention the pounding of the merciless years, Luisito Espinosa has decided to hang around indefinitely.

In fact, Espinosa, winner of two world crowns, has been priming for two fights.

He's training hard for a comeback bout slated in California next month.

Before that ring date, Espinosa will take an unfinished fight to Pattaya, Thailand this week.

The bout in seaside Pattaya will be fought outside the boxing ring, but there's no assurance it would not be as savage, violent as a real slug-out.

The fight venue will be the annual convention of the World Boxing Council.

Hermie Rivera, Espinosa's discoverer and ex-manager, has made sure Espinosa's complaint against fight figures who had cheated him of his $150,000 purse in a 1997 title bout would be tabled in the WBC confab.

* * *

Rivera sounds cocksure something fine would come out of Espinosa's fight in Pattaya.

Rivera says Luisito had presented himself to WBC president Jose Sulaiman at ringside during Manny Pacquiao's last fight in Las Vegas.

Sulaiman, in that meeting, assured Espinosa of assistance, anytime, anywhere.

"You're like a son to me," Rivera quotes the WBC head as saying, "you're one of our finest champs, I'll do anything for you."

Sulaiman was, of course, telling Espinosa he would give him full support if he wants a comeback bout.

But Rivera is confident the WBC chief would similarly accommodate the case they are submitting to the WBC central board.

* * *

Luisito had spent very sad Christmas seasons as a cold, hungry kid.

At least, today, he has made sure his kids won't go through the terrible trials he had been through. They have more than a couple of pairs of shoes each, unlike him, who had to go around barefooted picking bamboo poles during his Tondo boyhood.

Luisito has also made sure his wife and two kids would have a Christmas tree in their rented apartment in California this Christmas.

Of course, in order to afford that little luxury, Luisito has had to travel a long, long way. All the way back to his destitute, desperate childhood in the slums.

The two-time world champ has to stoop low and work as assistant bartender in an obscure watering hole somewhere in Daly City.

* * *

The first question friends and fans continue to ask is: where did all the millions he has earned in winning two world crowns—the WBA bantamweight and the WBC featherweight—go?

At least, those who know the ins and outs of boxing, like his former manager, insist it was not Espinosa's fault that he has ended running on a flat tire.

Instead of blaming Espinosa, Rivera swears Luisito's pitiful state was caused by fight figures who had cheated the former world champ.

In fact, Rivera, in a letter addressed to Sulaiman and the WBC central board, has minced no words in stating Espinosa's case.

"It's the first time in memory that a defending champion, a revered icon, was deliberately made a victim by crooked and colluding boxing personalities," Rivera wrote the WBC. "I have sought your attention with the hope this blatant transgression of Espinosa's rights won't be repeated and his purse should be restituted soon."

* * *

Heading the list of those Rivera and Espinosa are charging is Larry de Pedro, former governor of South Cotabato who staged Luisito's title defense against Argentina's Carlos Rios in 1997.

Also on the list are Joe Koizumi, Espinosa's estranged Japanese handler, and Dominador Cepeda, the reigning head of the Games and Amusements Board when the 1997 title bout was staged.

Assigned to deliver the complaint to the WBC board was Lope Sarreal Jr., president of the Philippine Boxing Federation.

Hermie, who explains they have turned to the WBC as a last resource, says their main guns are trained on Cepeda.

As head of the local supervising body during the 1997 title bout, Cepeda, Rivera claims, should've made sure that purses were paid before the fight.

Rivera proceeds to accuse Cepeda of coercing Espinosa to fight, despite the anomalous absence of the purse.

Unfortunately, Rivera says Cepeda is notoriously close to Sulaiman, the WBC big boss.

That alone doesn't ensure Espinosa's unfinished fight slated in Pattaya would not be bloody and brutal.

Greenpeace to rake up 'more evidence'

By Christian V. Esguerra

IN A last-ditch effort to stop the use of thermoselect technology to solve the garbage crisis in Metro Manila, the environmental group Greenpeace Philippines yesterday vowed to present more damaging evidence against the garbage technology.

Von Hernandez, campaign director of Greenpeace in Southeast Asia, said his group would put together pieces of evidence against thermoselect in a dossier that would be submitted to President Macapagal-Arroyo, Environment Secretary Heherson Alvarez and the Metro Manila Mayors.

"We will give them the facts and we will let them decide on the basis of evidence," Hernandez yesterday told the Inquirer.

Earlier, Metro Manila Development Authority Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. asked the environmental group to present concrete proof that the use of thermoselect technology posed environmental dangers. Metro Manila mayors led by Parañaque Mayor Joey Marquez were looking at thermoselect as the ultimate solution to the mounting garbage crisis in the metropolis.

Greenpeace is now collating reports from its different chapters abroad, particularly Europe, on the supposed environmental hazards of thermoselect, Hernandez said.

He said his group decided to come up with the dossier after Metro Manila mayors insisted on building thermoselect factories in Metro Manila despite heavy criticisms against the technology, primarily from Greenpeace.

Greenpeace has been campaigning worldwide against thermoselect because of the many environmental laws it has violated, he added.

Hernandez also pointed out that even the European Union considers the technology a process of incineration.

The US-based Interstate Waste Technologies Inc., project coordinator of the consortium that proposed the thermoselect project to local officials, had denied Greenpeace's allegations, calling them lies.

Roger van den Berghe, Interstate's Philippine consultant, said thermoselect technology was not an incineration process since it does not burn garbage. It uses instead a high-temperature process to convert wastes into useable materials, Van den Berghe explained.

Greenpeace said the so-called non-burn procedure was merely a euphemism for incineration, which the Clean Air Act of 1999 bans.

Thieves hit 3rd burger restaurant in 1 week

ONE week after Jollibee and McDonald's branches were robbed in Manila, a Wendy's outlet in the University Belt was held up before dawn yesterday.

Two unidentified gunmen robbed Wendy's Morayta, taking P20,000 and the security guard's service firearm, a cal. .38 revolver, said investigator SPO4 Manuel Dy of the Western Police District Station IV in Sampaloc.

But besides taking their loot, the robbers also opened fire while they were running away, Dy said.

Stray bullets hit bystander Homer Montehermosa, 22, of Sulo Street, Sta. Cruz, Manila, and damaged the parked car of a certain Anthony Kho, Dy added.

Desk officer SPO4 Herminio Gonzaga said the robbery happened at 1:10 a.m. yesterday.

The two men approached the cashier but when branch manager Garry Antonio walked up to them to ask for their orders, the two men pulled out guns and announced a hold-up.

Security guard Zacarias Pedroche, of the Flag Security Agency, was taken by surprise and the two men were able to take his .38 cal. revolver.

Philip C. Tubeza

THE late Miss Rita Gomez in a courtship scene with Francisco.

Toy gun heist a dud

By Philip C. Tubeza

BUSINESSMAN Jorra Gill Singh, 38, was collecting debt payments in Manila when three robbers from Cainta, Rizal, held him up yesterday.

Unknown to him, the trio was armed with a toy gun.

Luckily for Singh, a resident of Sampaloc, Manila, Manila policemen and bystanders came to his rescue when he cried for help after the robbers had taken his P7,000, police said.

Police arrested Bienvenido Villanueva, 29, Joselito Lobat, 34, and Crispin Papa, 29. An angry mob even beat up Lobat, police added.

Only after the three culprits were caught did Singh realize that they were armed only with a plastic pistol.

Police said Singh was collecting loan payments when he was robbed at the corner of Ramon Magsaysay Avenue and Santol Street in Sta. Mesa around 10:30 a.m. yesterday.

Singh was on board his motorcycle when the three men, who were on board another motorcycle, blocked his way.

Lobat alighted from the motorcycle, pulled out a gun and announced the holdup. Surprised, Singh surrendered the P7,000 cash he had collected. But before Lobat could go back to his colleagues, Singh shouted for help.

Bystanders rushed to his aid. Papa and Villanueva drove off to escape the mob, leaving Lobat with the loot.

Karen's 'lolo' made girls swoon as a '50s film heartthrob

(From page A25)

he was really senile.

That man is Rudy Francisco, a former Sampaguita Pictures matinee idol and lawyer. He is, as this interview shows, as lucid as the day he left show biz nearly 50 years ago.

Francisco, now 79, exercises in his home gym every day and spends hours at his computer at night.

Few viewers of the burger commercial know that Francisco was once an actor who starred in films opposite Gloria Romero, Carmen Rosales, Lolita Rodriguez, Myrna Delgado and the late Norma Vales.

Francisco is also the brother of another good-looking former actor, Fred Montilla.

Francisco is getting a second taste of fame as he is now recognized everywhere he goes. But he is identified not as Rudy Francisco but as Karen's "lolo."

"I always get teased by people who ask, 'Lolo, nasaan na si Karen'," Francisco said. "My standard reply is, 'Hinahanap ko nga, 'eto dala ko 'yung kalahati ng burger ko'."

Final choice

According to stage and movie actor RS Francisco, it wasn't hard convincing his father to face the cameras again for the 30-seconder TV commercial.

Francisco was an 11th hour choice to play the lolo in the ad, but the former heartthrob didn't mind.

Hemisphere-Leo Burnett, the advertising agency that created the commercial, earlier auditioned several men for the TV commercial. But it finalized the casting for the commercial only after they saw Francisco.

"When my son (RS) told me that we were going to an ad agency, I thought he was only joking, but I went with him anyway," Francisco told the Inquirer.

"They made me do my VTR and they made me ad-lib and act like I was senile. That same evening, I got the script for the commercial and I was asked to shoot the next day."

The ad's opening shot shows Francisco playing with a napkin, which he forms into a doll.

"Actually, I was just doing it during a break, but when the director saw it, he liked it and he said we would include it in the commercial," Francisco said. "Another time while waiting, he heard me singing 'Leron, leron sinta.' He also liked the song and made me sing it in full. He was amazed that I still remember the lyrics."

Francisco said he didn't have a hard time doing the commercial, directed by Swiss-American Thierry Notz.

Playing the granddaughter Karen is Glomi de los Reyes, who has appeared in supporting roles in other TV ads.

No grandchildren

"I enjoyed doing the commercial even if we had to stay up late," Francisco said. "But I understood the late-night work.

"The director asked me what time I usually sleep. I told him I'm already in bed at 8:30 p.m., but once my wife is asleep, I get up and work on my computer. That made him laugh."

FAMILY MAN Francisco and wife Marietta celebrate their 35th wedding anniversary with their sons (from left) Rac, actor RS and Peter.

Francisco is married to Marietta Yulo, of Bacolod City. They have three sons.

RS, the middle child, did a critically praised role in the Dolphy starrer, "Markova: Comfort Gay," directed by Gil Portes for last year's Metro Manila Film Festival.

The eldest son, Peter, is an advertising executive. The youngest, Rac, is an information technology wiz.

"I'm the only grandfather without a grandchild," Francisco says.

Although he gave up acting, Francisco never really left Sampaguita Pictures, where he worked as legal counsel for several years.

The former actor earned his commerce degree (major in accounting) at the Far Eastern University, where he graduated cum laude.

He obtained his law degree from the same university and passed the bar with a grade of 86.

His film credits include "Dalagang Ilocana" with Gloria Romero and Ric Rodrigo, "Batas ng Daigdig" and "Tulisang Pugot" with Fred Montilla, "May Umaga Pang Darating" with Carmen Rosales and Gloria Romero, "Binibining Kalog" with Lolita Rodriguez and Dolphy and "Lola Cinderella" with Rodriguez.

Prayers

After his appearance in the burger ad, ABS-CBN recently asked him to make a guest appearance in the horror-drama thriller, "Okatokat." In the episode to be shown this month, he plays a sick grandfather.

Francisco must have impressed the show's production staff. He is being considered to become a semi-regular cast member.

Francisco has been married to Marietta for 36 years now. Every morning, when he wakes up, Francisco leads his wife and three sons in praying the rosary.

"Then I say my own prayers for the family," he said. "At the end of the day, we all pray again to thank the Lord for all our blessings. Then I always tell my wife, 'I love you'.

"I hope our marriage will last until 100 years," he added. "And even when we're really, really old, I hope she will still sleep with me."

Cuneta son faces criminal charges

By Christian V. Esguerra

A PASAY City councilor who is a son of former Pasay Mayor Pablo Cuneta is facing criminal charges before the city's prosecutor's office.

Councilor Generoso Cuneta, president of the Pasay Barangay League, was accused of falsifying public documents and 15 counts of malversation of public funds, according to the three-page complaint-affidavit of Emmanuel Cinco, the league's executive director.

Cinco claimed in his affidavit that Cuneta applied "undue influence and pressure" on treasurer Eduardo Napa to issue checks for P250,000 payable to the respondent.

In a separate affidavit, Napa corroborated the accusation, saying Cuneta "coerced" him to prepare and issue the checks for supposed cash advances between February 1999 and December 2000.

Cuneta "exerted undue advantage, pressure and influence over his treasurer to cause the preparation and issuance of several checks payable to him" without the approval of the league's board of directors, Cinco said in his affidavit.

He claimed that the board issued a check for P3,000 as medical assistance to a barangay chair in September last year, but Cuneta had allegedly substituted his name for the barangay officials and endorsed the check.

Firecracker explosion injures 5

BOCAUE, Bulacan—Five workers were hurt Saturday when their makeshift firecracker factory in Barangay Igulot here exploded, police said.

Supt. Christopher Montillano, Bocaue police director, identified the injured workers as Adelaida Antigua, 57; Dalia Torge, 16; Loreta Miguelas, 29; and couple Rolly and Nida Aloc.

Antigua, Torge and Miguelas suffered second-degree burns and were taken to the Jose Reyes Memorial Hospital in Manila.

The Alocs were taken to the Sta. Maria district hospital in Sta. Maria town for treatment of their third-degree burns.

Montillano said the explosion came around 11 a.m. Saturday while the workers were rushing the production of *kuwitis* (skyrockets).

He said investigation showed that one of the workers accidentally dropped a chemical mixture which sparked the explosion.

The factory, actually a shanty in a rice field in Barangay Igulot, was owned by one Mylene Faminiano, police said. *Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Harrison died 'surrounded by love,' says Indian mentor

LOS ANGELES/LONDON — George Harrison, the "Quiet" Beatle who was so self-effacing that he called himself only an observer inside the world's most famous pop group, went to his death peacefully and had spent the day before his death with his musical mentor Ravi Shankar.

"We spent the day the day before with him and even then he looked so peaceful, surrounded by love," Shankar, the classical Indian sitar player, said in a statement. "George was a brave and beautiful soul, full of love, childlike humor and a deep spirituality."

Harrison died of cancer at a private residence in Los Angeles on Thursday afternoon with his wife Olivia and 24-year-old son Dhani at his side, according to long-time family friend Gavin de Becker, an internationally known security consultant. The Beatle was 58.

'Imagine'

Many rushed to places associated with the Beatles, like their studio in London's Abbey Road, the Liverpool Cavern Club where the group started and Central Park's Strawberry Fields in New York not far from where John Lennon was shot dead in 1980 by a deranged fan.

Flowers, candles, drawings and a single apple alluding to the Beatles' record label, Apple Corp., adorned the "Imagine" mosaic at the entrance to Strawberry Fields. A small sign read "Goodbye George, may you and John be together forever."

A gray-haired man strummed a guitar and sang Beatles songs, while 30 people stood in silence, many of them wiping tears.

HARRISON

In London, a medley of Beatles songs was played during the changing of the guard at Buckingham Palace and Queen Elizabeth II said Harrison's passing was "very sad."

Liverpool, the northern English birthplace of the Beatles, put official flags at half-mast. A book of condolence was opened for the guitarist who wrote "All Things Must Pass" and once observed in a song "Life flows on within, in and without you."

Beatle Paul McCartney, who long ago made up differences with Harrison over the stormy breakup of the Beatles in 1970, told reporters in London: "He was a lovely guy and a very brave man and had a wonderful sense of humor. He is really just my baby brother."

McCartney said he had last seen Harrison, a life-long smoker, a few weeks ago: "He was obviously very unwell but he was cracking jokes like he always was and he'll be sorely missed."

Ringo mourns

Beatle drummer Ringo Starr mourned a best friend, saying, "We will miss George for his sense of love, his sense of music and his sense of laughter."

Legendary singer-songwriter Bob Dylan, who befriended the Beatles during the '60s and performed with Harrison as part of the 1980s "supergroup" the Traveling Wilburys, called him a man who "inspired love and had the strength of a hundred men."

"George was a giant, a great, great soul with all of the humanity, all of the wit and humor, all the wisdom, the spirituality, the commonsense of a man and compassion for people," Dylan said in a statement.

"He was like the sun, the flowers and the moon, and we will miss him enormously. The world is a profoundly emptier place without him."

Lennon's widow Yoko Ono said Harrison had brought magic to all who knew him. "George has given so much in his lifetime and continues to do so even after his passing, with his music, his wit and his wisdom," she said.

A song-writer and guitarist, Harrison married the sounds of the East with Western pop by introducing the sitar in Lennon's 1965 song, "Norwegian Wood." The instrument also features on the reflective Harrison classic "Within You, Without You."

He clearly lived in the shadow of John Lennon and Paul McCartney, who were the group's flamboyant chief songwriters, although his lead guitar work helped give the Beatles their signature sound.

He called himself the "Economy Class Beatle" and once said he felt like an observer with the group "even though I was with them. John and Paul were the stars..."

He also once told Newsweek magazine: "The Beatles exist apart from myself. I am not really Beatle George. Beatle George is like a suit or a shirt I once wore on occasion. Until the end of my life, people will see the shirt and mistake it for me."

For millions of grieving fans, it was the end of an era.

Compositions

Harrison, whose many compositions included "While My Guitar Gently Weeps" and two reflection on being a Beatle 'When We Were Fab" and "All Those years Ago," first disclosed in 1998 that he had been treated for throat cancer.

His death followed weeks of undergoing last-ditch treatments in New York and Los Angeles for inoperable brain cancer, according to published reports.

As recently as last Thursday, on the US Thanksgiving holiday, Harrison was reported to have been receiving chemotherapy at the UCLA Medical Center in Los Angeles.

He had previously undergone experimental radiation treatments at the Staten Island University Hospital, according to newspaper reports.

An earlier flurry of reports that Harrison was near death prompted the rock legend in July to issue a statement saying he was "active and feeling very well."*Reuters*

Side A feels threat from new bands but 'we're not insecure'

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Leah Salterio

CHANCES are, the news that Side A Band has moved to a new recording company would make music fans conclude that something went wrong between the pop quintet and their former recording label.

But Side A's **Joey Generoso, Naldy Gonzales, Joey Benin, Ernie Severino** and **Kelly Badon** dismiss the speculation. They declare there's no bad blood between them and Warner Music, which gave them seven albums.

The group's long-time manager, **Wyngard Tracy**, said Side A also received documented offers from other recording outfits.

"But MCA had the most realistic offer," he says. "There are those who would promise you the moon and the stars, but I don't want the guys to get disappointed when the promises are not fulfilled."

Some companies even tried to lure Side A with movie contracts, on top of the recording deal.

"But they are not actors," Wyngard says.

"We don't even know if we have acting potentials," adds Joey, the group's vocalist.

Side A made their recording debut with Ivory Records. But it was only with their second album from Vicor Music Corp. that the group scored a big hit with "Hold On." The hit track was produced by **Chito Ilagan**, then vice president of Vicor Music.

Side A is now reunited with Ilagan, who is the managing director of Polyeast/MCA Universal.

The music of Side A is best described as pop/R&B and a bit of rock 'n' roll. In their regular gigs and concerts, they sing **Steve Perry**, Earth, Wind and Fire, Hall and Oates. After 16 years in the music business, Side A continues to draw the crowds, whether in a watering hole, on campus or a big concert venue.

"Longevity is the key," Wyngard says.

Another key to Side A's success is their strong friendship. The guys consider themselves part of one, big, happy family. Their zealousness and dedication are also strong factors which contribute to their success and growth as artists.

And despite the emergence of other bands with younger members, Side A's place remains steady in the music firmament.

"We do get threatened, but we're never insecure," Joey admits.

"We're like wine which gets better with age," Naldy maintains. "Other bands have done it, like Aerosmith, Rolling Stones and U2. They've been in the music scene for ages, but they are still popular."

SIDE A Band. Will stick to performing.

Before moving to MCA Universal, Side A created a stir with "The Platinum Collection," a compilation of their biggest hits from Warner Music.

With MCA Universal, Side A signed a two-year contract involving at least two albums. The group expects to release their first MCA Universal album in the first quarter of 2002.

"We want to have an all-original album," says Naldy.

Another plan is for Side A to record an album with **Martin Nievera**, who is also an MCA Universal star.

On Dec. 15, Side A marks their 16 years in the business with a major concert-party, "Side A: Going on 17," at the Araneta Coliseum. Presented by Big Time Productions, the show will also feature special guests **Ogie Alcasid, Lani Misalucha**, The Hunks, **Willie Revillame**, Hotlegs Dancers and the Manoeuvres. **Bert de Leon** directs.

Despite their enviable status, Side A prefers to touch-base with the crowd by doing regular gigs at Suburbia, which they also partly own.

As they go on their 17th year, the band members assure their fans Side A will be more visible than ever. In fact, this early, negotiations have been finalized for Side A to share the stage with Freestyle in a Valentine concert at the Araneta Coliseum.

Side A will also do a provincial tour in Cebu, Davao, Clark and Baguio.

Not just little sister

FOR a time, **Alessandra de Rossi** was better known as the younger sister of new screen siren **Assunta de Rossi**. But after she earned raves for her performance in **Carlitos Siguion-Reyna**'s "Azucena," Alessandra proved she is more than Assunta's little sister.

In her new film, "Hubog," Alessandra will win the hearts of moviegoers anew. Although "Hubog" topbills Assunta, it will have Alessandra playing the challenging role of an autistic teenager who allows men to molest her in exchange for a hamburger.

"I did not pattern my character after anyone because *Direk* **Joel (Lamangan)** didn't want it that way," Alessandra says. "I just did what the script called for. I guess that's better because there won't be any comparison."

Industry insiders are saying that "Hubog" is Alessandra's biggest break after "Azucena." And if "Hubog" makes it as an official entry in this year's Metro Manila Film Festival, Alessandra could be a bet for best supporting actress.

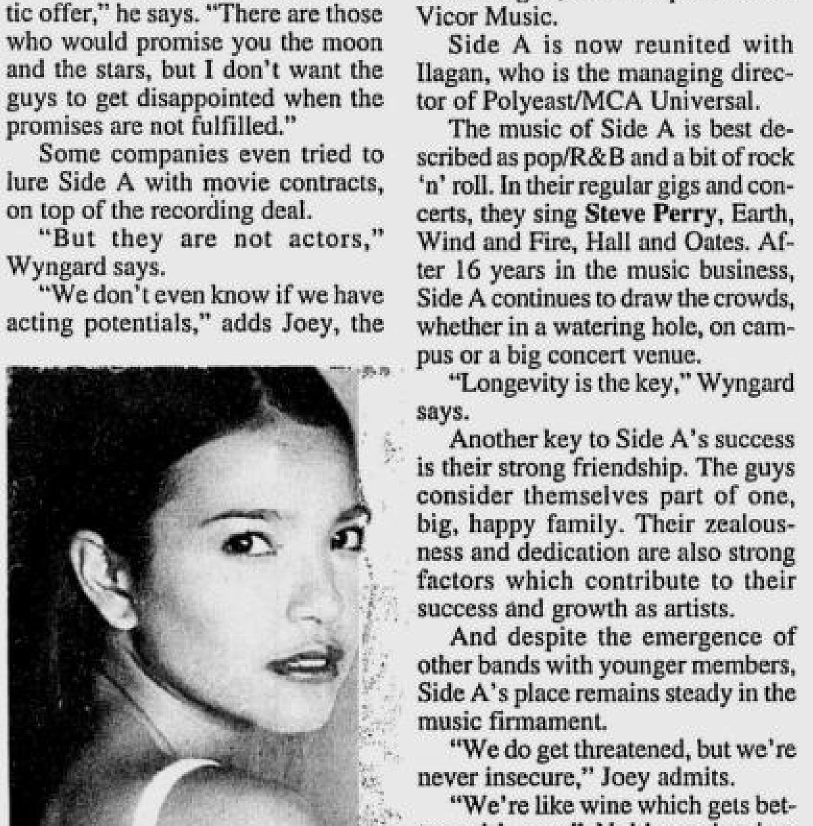
But Alessandra did not make the movie to win an award. She simply took on the challenge of the role and gave it her best, in the hope that meatier portrayals will come her way in the future.

Lamangan made sure Alessandra's character will shine in "Hubog," which has sexy scenes featuring Assunta. Alessandra holds her own in her dramatic scenes.

Lamangan shot "Hubog" at his favorite setting, the Baseco Compound in Tondo, which he also used in his critically acclaimed "Hiram na Mukha" and "Bulaklak ng Maynila."

"Baseco is a world all its own," Lamangan explains. "It has a market place, a police station and it's an ideal setting for a poor community. It clearly pictures the life in the slums and how the poor cope."

With the script written by **Roy Iglesias**, "Hubog" also stars **Jay Manalo** and **Wendell Ramos**.


BIG TIME is waiting for Alessandra de Rossi, Assunta's younger sis.

BACKSTREET Boys comes out with greatest hits anthology.

Lani releases concert album

RECORDS

VIVA Records releases the live album of Lani Misalucha's major solo concert at the Araneta Coliseum.

Billed as "Lani Misalucha: The Crossover Live Tour," the two-CD set features over two hours of recorded live music that takes listeners to the edge of an authentic concert experience.

Produced by Vic del Rosario Jr. and Vicente del Rosario III, the album includes the highlights of the concert, such as "Queen of the Night," "Deeper Love," "You Don't Have to Say You Love Me" and the "Sister Act" medley which features Lani with her sisters May and Karlyn Bayot, and including the songs "I Will Survive," "It's Raining Men" and "No More Tears."

Another highlight of the album is Lani's "Divas Medley 2," one of the most-applauded numbers in the concert. It features Lani singing the hits of her fellow divas—Asia's Queen of Songs and original diva Pilita Corrales ("A Million Thanks To You"), pop diva Kuh Ledesma ("Til I Met You"), Divine Diva Zsa Zsa Padilla ("Hiram"), Soul Queen Jaya ("Dahil Tanging Ikaw"), Mega Diva Sharon Cuneta ("Maging Sino Ka Man") and Songbird Regine Velasquez ("On the Wings of Love").

Other cuts are the operatic aria "Nessun Dorma," "Il Mio Cuore Va" (the Italian version of "My Heart Will Go On" from the movie "Titanic") and Lani's Whitney Houston medley ("I Will Always Love You," "I Have Nothing," "All at Once," "Didn't We Almost Have It All," "Greatest Love of All" and the Olympic Games theme, "One Moment in Time").

"Lani Misalucha: The Crossover Live Tour" even includes the concert's explosive encore, where Lani did a "Broadway Medley," and the songs "Last Dance," "Never Can Say Goodbye," "Because You Loved Me" and "Could It Be I'm Falling In Love."

The two-CD set comes in special book-type packaging, with photos from the concert taken by noted lensman Jun de Leon.

"Lani Misalucha: The Crossover Live Tour" album has Rene Salta as associate producer and Alwyn Cruz as supervising producer.

Lea's Christmas gift

ALTHOUGH she does not spend most of her time in the Philippines, international stage actress Lea Salonga pays her dues and sees to it that she makes up for lost time by giving to her Filipino audience the gift of song.

Christmas time is of no exception. Lea's gift comes in the form of "A Christmas Album," which contains 10 songs paying tribute to the season.

International musician and songwriter Jim Brickman penned two cuts in the album—"The Gift," which Lea sang with former boyfriend, US-based stage actor Michael Lee; and "Even Santa Fell In Love," the carrier single which Brickman especially wrote for her.

The Company joins Lea in two of the well-loved songs—"Merry Christmas Darling" and "12 Days of Christmas."

Selections include "The Christmas Song," "It's Just Another New Year's Eve," "Pasko na Sinta Ko," "Sana Ngayong Pasko," "Grown Up Christmas List" and "Mary Did You Know?"

Lea's first Christmas album brings back the effective and proven collaboration between Lea and her brother, Gerard Salonga. Aside from being the album's producer, Gerard was responsible for the arrangement, keyboard and programming of most of the songs in the album.

"Lea Salonga: A Christmas Album" is now available in cassettes and CDs from BMG Records (Pilipinas) Inc.

SALONGA. Sings Christmas tunes in a 10-track album.

Jazz Christmas tunes

SPECTRUM Music offers an array of Christmas albums topped by the Kenny G-inspired "Winter's Cool" and "Winter's Fire" albums, each containing 15 tracks fueled with the sensuous thump of saxophone to spark a cool jazzy Christmas holiday.

Jam with the Jamaican beat in the Bob Marley-inspired Christmas reggae album which contains 13 tracks of popular Yuletide hits like "Silent Night," "The First Noel" and "Oh Holy Night," among others.

The album takes listeners to a far-away tropical paradise, transforming the original laid back rhythm of the all-familiar songs into the suave danceable beat of reggae.

Host a Christmas dance showdown right under your roof with the glitter of mirror balls and flashy lights sparked by the "Christmas Dance Mix Album." The compilation carries six selections of famous Christmas carols set into a fast disco pace enough to entice your bodies to groove to the lively Christmas beat.

Greatest hits

THE BACKSTREET BOYS, who have become pop icons for the ages, release their "Greatest Hits Chapter One" album, now available under Universal Records.

The group has sold over 65 million albums worldwide, millions of long form home videos, and took over 2 of the Top 10 slots on the esteemed "most records scanned in a single week" list.

The Backstreet Boys Greatest Hits Chapter One" album contains mega-hits from their Diamond Award albums (as certified by the Record Industry Association of America)—the self-titled debut and "Millennium" and from their year 2000 release "Black and Blue," which has already reached the eight times platinum mark.

Universal Records announces free limited edition, full-color Backstreet Boys poster-calendar will be given to buyers of the new album at Music One (Glorietta, Megamall, Quezon Avenue), O Music Video (Power Plant, Rockwell), all Radio City outlets, Odyssey outlets and SM department store record outlets.

The new album features a new cut, "Drowning," which will surely be another pop classic from Backstreet Boys.

The Backstreet Boys are Brian Littrell, Al McLean, Howie Dorough, Nick Carter and Kevin Richardson.

The 16 songs in their first "Greatest Hits" anthology are "I Want It That Way," "Everybody (Backstreet's Back)," "As Long As You Love Me," "Show Me the Meaning of Being Lonely," "Quit Playing Games (With My Heart)," "We've Got It Going," "All I Have To Give," "Larger Than Life," "Anywhere For You," "Get Down," "I'll Never Break Your Heart," "The Call," "Shape of My Heart," "The One" and "More Than That."

SM CINEMA

SM Dial-A-Movie Tel/ 633-9999

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1	HUWAG KANG KIKIBO
2	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
3	HARRY POTTER
4	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
5	MONSTERS, INC.
6	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
7	TIKIM
8	SERENDIPITY

CENTERPOINT
7149522-7161416

1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2	ANO BANG MERON KA?
3	HARRY POTTER
4	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
5	MONSTERS, INC
6	WEYT A MINIT
7	HARRY POTTER
8	SERENDIPITY
9	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
10	TIKIM

CITY FAIRVIEW
9350749

1	TIKIM
2	THE ONE
3	WEYT A MINIT
4	HARRY POTTER
5	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
6	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
7	HARRY POTTER
8	MONSTERS, INC
9	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
10	ANO BANG MERON KA?
11	SERENDIPITY
12	HUWAG KANG KIKIBO

CITY MANILA
5239240

1	MONSTERS, INC.
2	SERENDIPITY
3	THE ONE
4	HARRY POTTER
5	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
6	HARRY POTTER
7	ANO BANG MERON KA?
8	WEYT A MINIT
9	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
10	HUWAG KANG KIKIBO
11	TIKIM
12	PAGDATING NG PANAHON

MEGAMALL
6331901 • 6329401

1	HARRY POTTER
2	SERENDIPITY
3	MONSTERS, INC.
4	HARRY POTTER
5	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
6	HARRY POTTER
7	THE ONE
8	WEYT A MINIT
9	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
10	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
11	ANO BANG MERON KA?
12	TIKIM

TUTUBAN
2514302

1	HARRY POTTER
2	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
3	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
4	PAGDATING NG PANAHON

DIGITAL dts SOUND — DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

CITY NORTH EDSA
9295452

1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2	HARRY POTTER
3	TIKIM
4	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
5	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
6	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
7	HARRY POTTER
8	MONSTERS, INC
9	WEYT A MINIT
10	ANO BANG MERON KA?
11	HUWAG KANG KIKIBO
12	SERENDIPITY

SOUTHMALL
8066888

1	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
2	HARRY POTTER
3	MONSTERS, INC
4	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
5	WEYT A MINIT
6	SERENDIPITY
7	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
8	HARRY POTTER
9	HUWAG KANG KIKIBO
10	TIKIM

GUADALUPE COMM'L
8820985

1	TIKIM
2	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
3	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW

CEBU
2313636

1	HARRY POTTER
2	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
3	SERENDIPITY
4	SAKIM
5	KING OF GLADIATORS
6	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
7	MONSTERS, INC

ILOILO
3209422

1	SERENDIPITY
2	CLOSED
3	HARRY POTTER
4	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
5	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
6	MONSTERS, INC.
7	CLOSED
8	HAYOP SA SEX APPEAL

PAMPANGA
7128015

1	HARRY POTTER
2	MONSTERS, INC
3	WEYT A MINIT
4	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
5	CAPT. CORRELLI'S
6	PAGDATING NG PANAHON

SUCAT
8294635

1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2	MONSTERS, INC
3	HARRY POTTER
4	PAGDATING NG PANAHON

DAVAO

1	MONSTERS, INC
2	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
3	KAPITAN AMBO
4	HARRY POTTER
5	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
6	CAPT. CORRELLI'S

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1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON	In SONY DYNAMIC DIGITAL SOUND
2	HARRY POTTER	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
3	TIKIM	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
4	PAGDATING NG PANAHON	In DTS DIGITAL SOUND

GLORIETTA 4

1	HARRY POTTER	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
2	THE OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
3	HARRY POTTER THX	In DSD/SDDS/DTS DIGITAL SOUND
4	SERENDIPITY	In DTS DIGITAL SOUND
5	MONSTERS, INC.	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
6	MONSTER, INC.	In DTS/SDDS DIGITAL SOUND
7	PAGDATING NG PANAHON	In DTS DIGITAL SOUND

Art Film

GREENBELT

1	MONSTER, INC.	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
2	PAGDATING NG PANAHON	In SONY DYNAMIC DIGITAL SOUND
3	HARRY POTTER	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
4	REGINE AT THE MOVIES NOV. 30 / DEC. 1, 7, 8, 15, 16, 21, 22, 28, 29, 30 Onstage	

ALABANG TOWN CENTER

1	HARRY POTTER THX	In DSD/SDDS DIGITAL SOUND
2	MONSTER, INC.	In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
3	MONSTER, INC.	In DTS DIGITAL SOUND
4	HARRY POTTER	In DTS DIGITAL SOUND
5	PAGDATING NG PANAHON	In DTS DIGITAL SOUND

MMTA
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MOVIE GUIDE

NOW SHOWING

EMAIL: mmta@asia.com

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72

1 (DDS)	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
2 (SDDS)	MONSTER, INC.
3 (DTS)	HARRY POTTER
4 GOLD (DTS)	HARRY POTTER
5 GOLD (DOLBY)	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
6 GOLD (SDDS)	MONSTER, INC.
7 GOLD (DOLBY)	HARRY POTTER
8	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
9	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
10	SERENDIPITY

Pearl Plaza Cinemas
(Parañaque) tel. 853.4486

1	
2	
3 (DTS)	HARRY POTTER
4	TIKIM
5	
6 (DTS)	
Golden Pearl THX	

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 831.6603

1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2	HARRY POTTER
3	TIKIM

starmall Movies
(Shaw Blvd.) tel 724.4986

1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2	HARRY POTTER
3	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	MONSTERS, INC.
5	TIKIM

METROPOLIS star
543.3927 loc. 150

1	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
2	HUWAG KANG KIKIBO
3	TIKIM
4	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
5	MONSTERS, INC.
6	HARRY POTTER
7	RESERVE
8	RESERVE

PREMIERE CINEMA THX
(Makati City) tel 751.2011 to13

1	MONSTERS, INC

Center Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1	THE ONE
2	WEYT A MINIT

FCM FAIRVIEW CENTER MALL, INC.
tel 930.9515

1	TIKIM
2	MONSTERS, INC.
3	PAGDATING NG PANAHON

Spring
(Libertad, Pasay City) tel 831.7864

1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
A	TIKIM

Sunshine
(FTI, Taguig) tel 838.4301 loc. 3376

1	HARRY POTTER
2	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
3	TIKIM
4	MONSTERS, INC

GOTESCO CINEMA

City
(Manila) tel 734.8588

1 (DOLBY)	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2	RESERVE
3	RESERVE
4	TIKIM
5	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
6	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
7 (DTS)	HARRY POTTER
8 (SDDS)	MONSTERS, INC.
9 (DOLBY)	HARRY POTTER

Caloocan
tel 362.3508

2	PAGDATING NG PANAHON

Grand Central
(Caloocan) tel 364.3781

1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
3	TIKIM
4 (SDDS)	MONSTERS, INC.
5	HUWAG KANG KIKIBO
6 (DOLBY)	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
7 (DTS)	HARRY POTTER
8	WEYT A MINIT
9	KAPITAN AMBO

Commonwealth
tel 951.0083

1 (DTS)	HARRY POTTER
2	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
3	TIKIM
4	HUWAG KANG KIKIBO
5 (SDDS)	MONSTERS, INC
6	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
7 (DOLBY)	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
8	WEYT A MINIT

Ortigas
tel 656.6795

1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2	TIKIM
3 (DTS)	HARRY POTTER
4	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
5 (SDDS)	MONSTERS, INC

Universal
(Manila) tel 733.2470

1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON

Sampaguita
(Cubao) tel 911.7888

1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON

Dilson
(Manila) tel 734.7724

Dilson	SEDUCE
Lords	OBSESSION
Jennet	

MARKETPLACE Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856

1	
2	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
3	TIKIM

Prima
(Pasig) tel 641.1215

3	PAGDATING NG PANAHON

Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
SUPER CINERAMA
tel 733.4238

1 (DOLBY)	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2	MONSTERS, INC.
3	RESERVE
4	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
5	TIKIM

New Divisoria Mall
DIVISORIA CINEMA
tel 244.4619

1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2	TIKIM
3	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
4	RESERVE
5	RESERVE
6	MONSTERS, INC

Baclaran LRT
LRT CINEMA
tel 512.0115

1 (DOLBY)	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2	TIKIM

Berma
tel 079.2029

1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2	TIKIM

CitiMall
(Parañaque) tel 820.7269

1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2	TIKIM

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall
(Sta. Rosa Laguna)
tel (049) 534.2185 / 534.2198

1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
3 (DTS)	MONSTERS, INC

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2 (DTS)	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
3 (DOLBY)	HARRY POTTER
4	MONSTERS, INC

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel (049) 411.1146

1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2 (DOLBY)	MONSTERS, INC
3 (DTS)	HARRY POTTER
4	PAGDATING NG PANAHON

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771

1	THE ONE
2	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
3	SOON TO OPEN
4	SOON TO OPEN

Cinema 2000 MovieTown
(Tarlac)

1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
3 (DOLBY)	CAPT. CORRELLI'S
4 (DTS)	HARRY POTTER

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (SDDS)	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
2	TIKIM
3	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
4 (DTS)	MONSTERS, INC

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 (DOLBY)	MONSTERS, INC
2	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
3 (DTS)	HARRY POTTER
4	KING OF GLADIATORS
5	DUGONG ASO

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883

1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
3	MONSTERS, INC

Olivarez Los Baños
tel (049) 249-2558

1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2	HARRY POTTER
3	MONSTERS, INC.

Olivarez Tagaytay
tel (046) 413.0311

1	HARRY POTTER
2	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
3	HAYOP SA SEX APPEAL

Morales Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.9736

1	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2	MONSTERS, INC.
3	HARRY POTTER

Cabuyao
(Laguna City) tel (049) 531.4808

1 (DTS)	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
2 (DTS)	DUGONG ASO

Emperor
(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657

1	DUGONG ASO
2	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
3	HUWAG KANG KIKIBO

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1	THE BODY
2	HUWAG KANG KIKIBO
3	HARRY POTTER
4	PAGDATING NG PANAHON

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03

1 (DOLBY EX)	HARRY POTTER
2	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
3	SOON TO OPEN
4 (DTS ES)	MONSTERS, INC

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GALLERIA 632-0115-16 / 633-7841 loc. 279

1	HARRY POTTER
2	HARRY POTTER
3	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
4	MONSTER, INC.
5	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
6	MONSTER, INC.
7	HARRY POTTER
8	TIKIM
9	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
10	SERENDIPITY

ERMITA 536-7809 TO 12

1	MONSTER, INC.
2	HARRY POTTER
3	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
4	TIKIM
5	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
6	HARRY POTTER
7	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW

NOVALICHES 936-3229 TO 31

1	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
2	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
3	MONSTER, INC.
4	MONSTER, INC.
5	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
6	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
7	TIKIM
8	HARRY POTTER

BACOLOD (034) 441-0453 / 0458

1	HARRY POTTER
2	SERENDIPITY
3	THE ONE
4	MONSTER, INC.
5	KAPITAN AMBO
6	DUGONG ASO

METRO EAST 632-0115-16 / 633-7841

1	HARRY POTTER
2	HARRY POTTER
3	TIKIM
4	TIKIM
5	OTHERSIDE OF THE LAW
6	MONSTER, INC.
7	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
8	PAGDATING NG PANAHON

IMUS (046) 471-0198

1	HARRY POTTER
2	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
3	TIKIM
4	MONSTER, INC.
5	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
6	PAGDATING NG PANAHON

ILOILO (033) 336-0077 / 0078

1	HARRY POTTER
2	SERENDIPITY
3	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
4	MONSTER, INC.
5	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
6	MONSTER, INC.

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THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

ARANETA CENTER THEATERS 911-3101	
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-1	ANO BANG MERON KA?
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-2	KAPITAN AMBO
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-3 (DDS)	WEYT A MINIT
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-4 (SDDS)	HARRY POTTER
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-5 (DTS)	GLITTER
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-6 (DOLBY)	THE ONE
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-7 (DOLBY)	EARTHQUAKE
FARMERS PLAZA-1 (DOLBY)	HUWAG KANG KIKIBO
FARMERS PLAZA-2 (DOLBY)	HARRY POTTER
FIESTA CARNIVAL	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
NEW FRONTIER	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	UNFAITHFUL WIFE / SEX MEDUSA
ODEON	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
ODEON-2	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
ROBEN	TIKIM
TANDEM-1	SEX MEDUSA
TANDEM-2	SEX EDUCATION
TIMES	CROCODILE / ST. FRANCIS VILLE
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	CLOSED
ACT-4	CLOSED
CORONET-2	ORIGINAL SIN
QUEZON-1	TIKIM
REMAR	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
REMAR-2	TIKIM
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
B	TIKIM
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	GLITTER
CINEMA-2	HARRY POTTER
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	HUWAG KANG KIKIBO
CINEMA-2	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
CINEMA-3	WEYT A MINIT
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	SERENDIPITY
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	MONSTER, INC.
CINEMA-6	TIKIM
CINEMA-7	ANO BANG MERON KA?
CINEMA-8	KAPITAN AMBO
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	HARRY POTTER
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	HARRY POTTER
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	MONSTER, INC.
CINEMA-12	OTHER SIDE OF THE LAW
CINEMA-14	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
CINEMA-15	PAGDATING NG PANAHON
LORES	
CINEMA-2	CLOSED
CINEMA-3	CLOSED
POWER PLANT CINEMA	
CINEMA-1	MONSTERS, INC.
CINEMA-2	HARRY POTTER
CINEMA-3	MONSTERS, INC.
CINEMA-4	HARRY POTTER
CINEMA-5	SERENDIPITY
CINEMA-6	HARRY POTTER
UNIWIDE METROMALL	
(LAS PIÑAS)	
CINEMA-1	
CINEMA-2	
CINEMA-4	
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARAÑAQUE)	
CINEMA-1	ALIPIN NG TUKSO
CINEMA-2	THE OTHER SIDE OF LOVE
CINEMA-4	ALAMID

Joey-FM sets holiday mood

JOEY@ 92.3 Rhythms fills December nights with a string of movies and music to set the right holiday mood.

On Dec. 10 (Monday), Joey premieres the teen romance flick, "Summer Catch," 7:30 p.m. at Cinema 6 of Glorietta IV.

The movie stars Freddie Prinze Jr. and Jessica Biel in a poor-boy-meets-rich-girl tale filled with exciting baseball matches in between.

To make the event even more exciting, Joey will set up a mini-summer carnival in the theater lobby, complete with games, fortune telling, food and great prizes courtesy of Tommy Hilfiger Fragrances.

The premiere is co-presented by Haagen-Dazs, Mantou, Bayfresh and Del Monte Mango Delight. Participating sponsors are Colt 45, Nestlé Yogurt and Oliver's Super Sandwiches.

The movie magic continues with Joey's premiere of one of the most highly anticipated film adaptations of the decade, "The Lord of the Rings" at Cinema 6 of Glorietta IV on Dec. 20 (Thursday).

The movie features powerful performances from Elijah Wood as Frodo Baggins, Sean Astin, Sir Ian McKellen, Viggo Mortensen, Liv Tyler and Cate Blan-chett.

Prepare to enter J.R.R. Tolkien's world of wizards and hobbits as Joey recreates the world of middle-earth during the premiere.

The event is presented by Rustan's Essenses, Mastercard and Enchanted Kingdom, co-presented by Jufran, Sunlife Prosperity Funds, Bayfresh, Duty Free Philippines, Mantou, Zagu and Haagen-Dazs.

Participating sponsors are Del Monte Mango Delight, Mitsubishi Lancer and FHM Magazine.

Joey's December nights are likewise filled with great music. "Joey's Night Rhythms" takes Toy Symphony to Streetlife on Dec. 4 and 11 (Tuesday).

Joey's café tour is back for "Bean Me Up, Joey" at Figaro Ortigas (Dec. 7) and Rockwell (Dec. 14) to bring the soothing rhythms of Christmas, with the Acoustic Duo of Nobel Queano and Rodel Vidal and percussionist Louie Boogie.

Also on Dec. 14, Joey joins Ayala Center's "12 Days of Christmas," a benefit for the GMA Foundation with its "Winter Wonderland."

Featured performers are Calvin Millado, Bituin Escalante, Acoustic Jive and the cast of "Rent."

The show is presented by Northwest/KLM Royal Dutch Airlines and World Perks.

"Joey's Winter Wonderland" promotion will give away a holiday get-away for two to Vienna, Austria or Minneapolis, Minnesota.

The exciting event is also made possible by Gandour, Odyssey and Mitsubishi Adventure.

Tune in to Joey@92.3 FM for more great rhythms and exciting events.

MTRCB leaves site of Nida's death

By Agnes E. Donato

EMPLOYEES of the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board (MTRCB) could only sigh in relief after the government body's offices left the Atlanta Building on Annapolis Street in Greenhills, San Juan for a new place at the Aurora Milestone Building on Aurora Boulevard in Quezon City.

"It's like a heavy weight has been lifted from our shoulders," said MTRCB cashier Wina Nacilla.

On Monday, the MTRCB started vacating its offices on the 32nd and 33rd floors of the ill-fated Atlanta Centre where actress Nida Blanca was murdered barely a month ago. Blanca was a board member of the MTRCB and had attended a review session on the afternoon before she was found stabbed to dead inside her car parked at the 6th floor parking space of the building.

Nacilla said the MTRCB employees could have different reasons for feeling glad about their new office. But most of them were hoping for a peaceful stay in their new building.

"I'm just so relieved that we have moved out from our Atlanta office," she told the **Inquirer** in the midst of unopened boxes of computers and files. "Personally, I already felt it was a heavy burden working there, even long before Ms Blanca died."

An unexplainable feeling of gloom was how Eliezer Radovan described the atmosphere at the MTRCB's Atlanta office.

"You can't explain it but you feel it's there," he said.

Like Nacilla, Radovan is also a cashier. He revealed that things got difficult for the MTRCB workers financially during their stay in Atlanta Centre. Employees began making many cash advances since the agency moved to Atlanta in September, he said.

Nacilla described the "ambience" in the new office as "much lighter." Aside from it being nearer to Antipolo where she lives, the new office would also allow for better interaction among officials and employees, Nacilla said.

The MTRCB is temporarily holding office at the ground and 10th floors of the Aurora Milestone Building, while its office at the fourth floor is still being renovated.

Unlike in the Atlanta Centre where the MTRCB divisions occupied two floors, the entire agency will be located in just one floor once its office is finished.

The Philippine School for Business Administration, which is located right across the street, has even inspired Radovan to consider pursuing graduate studies.

But another employee, who requested anonymity, said that the agency transfer had little to do with the killing of Nida Blanca.

The decision to move out was made after a big fire hit the Slimmers World gym at the 27 floor of the Atlanta Centre last September and affected the MTRCB operations for two weeks, the employee said.

But Blanca's death might have somehow prompted the MTRCB officials to move out sooner than planned.

"We feel we're not safe here anymore," the employee said.

Alliance of Concerned Teachers-Philippines
Coalition

TREE OF HOPE JOAN BONDOC

Children from different schools decorate a Christmas tree with Christmas cards they made with drawings and messages of hope for a peaceful and meaningful holiday. The ceremony was held at the Manuel L. Quezon Memorial Circle in Quezon City.

Christmas festival launched

By Nelson F. Flores

THE MARIKINA City government launched its unique way of celebrating Christmas to make it merrier and transform the city into a center of festivities for eastern Metro Manila and Rizal province.

In a news conference, Marikina City Mayor Ma. Lourdes Fernando said the 51-day Marikina Christmas festival, which started on Nov. 15, was the city government's response to the growing public clamor for a memorable Christmas.

Fernando said the festival was also the city government's way of thanking government employees and residents who made Marikina what it is today— prosperous, thriving and the cleanest city in Metro Manila.

Fernando said more than 300 *tiangge* booths opened along the Marikina River bank, the longest jogging lane in the country. The booths sell souvenir items, food, clothes, leather shoes and bags, and novelty items.

Aside from the *tiangge*, a *Rehiyon-Rehiyon* celebration will also be held on Dec. 8 to honor Marikina residents who came from different regions and provinces in the country and settled permanently in the city, Fernando said.

The Rehiyon-Rehiyon celebration will be highlighted by day-long street dancing a la Rio de Janeiro and a drum and bugle parade by the La Carlota City drum beaters and dancers, Dinagyang tribesmen from Iloilo City, and the Masskara Dancers from Bacolod City.

Recognition will also be given to the cleanest and most orderly school, community, subdivision, tricycle terminal and market and business establishments from Dec. 10 to 14, Fernando said.

A 24-hour non-stop band show at the Marikina River bend will be held from Dec. 14 to 16, while bike enthusiasts can join the Craziest Bike contest on Dec. 15.

A shoe fashion show and a fantasy hairdo contest will be part of the celebration on Dec. 20.

An exhibit dubbed Araw ng mga Antigo on Dec. 18 will feature antique furniture and other woodworks, while high school and elementary students will compete in a chorale contest.

Other events include the Paskuhan ng mga Bata, Fun Run, City Garage Sale, Kasalang Bayan, Pasiklaban ng mga Kanyon, daily water sports, an animal trail, and river taxi ride. A big night concert and a fireworks display will cap the celebration.

Fernando said the celebration was financed entirely with funds generated from the tiangge.

Erring drivers sent to 'reform schools'

THE MARIKINA City government has began to implement an ordinance requiring erring drivers to undergo seminars on traffic rules in designated driving reform schools.

Marikina City information officer Mina Satorre said Ordinance No. 036 Series of 1999 (creating streetside reform schools for trade violators) is now being implemented in the city. She said the ordinance directs traffic enforcers to make erring drivers attend a three-hour seminar on traffic rules and regulations, road courtesy and signs, and related matters.

Depending on the gravity of the traffic violation, an offender may also be asked to perform traffic reform service from one to three hours after the completion of the lecture, she said.

"The seminars would be conducted in designated areas, which is usually along the street," Satorre explained. *Nelson F. Flores*

Pasay man stabs brod for drinking too much

A MAN stabbed and seriously injured his younger brother for refusing to stop drinking liquor with his friends in Pasay City.

Patrick Asparan, 19, almost died from several stab wounds in the body and was in serious condition at the Philippine General Hospital as of yesterday, police said.

Asparan's older brother Phillip allegedly stabbed him during a confrontation about 12:45 p.m. Saturday, police said.

Investigation showed Asparan was in a drinking session with his friends near their house at the Teacher's Bliss on Kalayaan Street when Phillip arrived and told him to go home.

Asparan's refusal to heed his older brother resulted in a fistfight between them, during which Phillip pulled out a knife and stabbed his younger brother several times, police said.

Phillip himself rushed his younger brother to a hospital before escaping. *Christian V. Esguerra*

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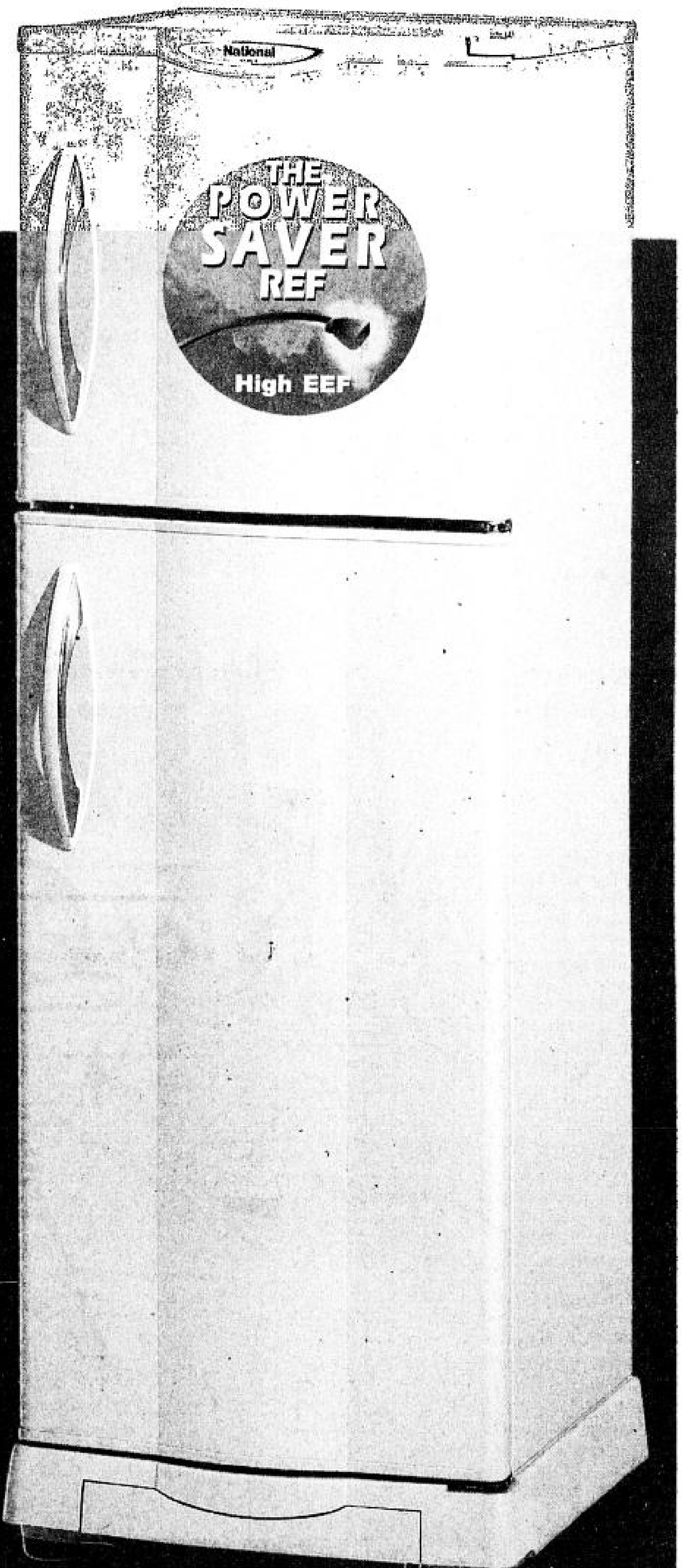

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Paolo and Miriam pay tribute to workers

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

PAOLO Bediones and **Miriam Quiambao** literally worked hard for the money on their "Xtra, Xtra" show some days ago as they paid tribute to janitors, busboys and gasoline station attendants by spending a day at those workers' jobsites.

The features were both interesting and instructive, and generated insights not only into those service-oriented jobs, but also into people's attitudes regarding them.

Working as a janitress, Miriam got on her knees cleaning toilets, among other chores. It was a good thing that she was working in a modern building with a big housekeeping staff, so she didn't have to get *really* down and dirty.

But the relatively spiffy conditions of the office had one drawback: the people there didn't notice the janitors working in their midst, so they didn't even recognize ex-beauty queen Miriam.

She even had a run-in with an executive, so was surprised to see a TV camera intruding into her office, and grouchily rejected Miriam's peace offering.

Paolo had his share of this cavalier treatment when he worked as a busboy at a fast-food outlet. The customers didn't recognize him, either, and a couple were terribly surly as they berated him for some real or imagined infractions.

At the end of the long day, Paolo groaned that he was bone-weary—*and* rather psychologically bruised because some of the customers appeared to have looked down on him and his ostensibly "menial" line of work.

Miriam then had another outing as a blue-collar worker, this time as a gasoline station attendant. The work here was not as constantly taxing as her stint as janitress, but she still wasn't recognized because customers saw her more as a cipher than as an individual—this, despite her height and dusky beauty.

Miriam and Paolo's stints had a telling effect on them. As celebrities and media personalities, they are used to people admiring and being nice to them. As "ordinary" service personnel, on the other hand, they ceased to be human and were reduced to the level of machines.

This says a lot about our mis-education regarding people who do manual labor. We're so fixated on doctors, lawyers and other "professionals" that we look down on the "lesser" occupations.

And yet, society wouldn't function without service personnel. And, in more advanced countries, they make good money and are appreciated for their valuable contribution to running the cogs of business, industry and the service sector.

When we look down on them, we reveal our own shallowness, and our silly bias against workers who get their hands dirty in the performance of their duties.

Thanks to "Xtra, Xtra" for revealing this snitty, snooty attitude, and for reminding us that it's high time that we change it. As for Paolo and Miriam, here's to your next incognito immersion in the workaday world.

What's next for Miriam? A shoestore stint ala "Paraisong Parisukat?" And, how would Paolo fare as a bus conductor? Ooops, just asking . . .

'Oprah'

"THE OPRAH Winfrey Show" tackles these topics this week on Star World (at 1 p.m. weekdays):

Monday, Dec. 3, "Photos that Define Us" shows how feelings can be reflected through the images we create.

Tuesday, Dec. 4, Oprah's favorite counselor is featured in "Dr. Phil's Get Real Challenge, Part 4."

Wednesday, Dec 5, "Postpartum Psychosis" gives the lowdown on women's depression after giving birth.

Thursday, Dec. 6, "Martha Stewart's Comforts of Home."

Friday, Dec. 7, "Living with Terrorism."

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SL45 is also equipped with a Wap 1.1 browser and a T9 intelligent text input. It also has an advanced address book, calendar, calculator, currency converter, stop-watch and four-way cursor for single button control.

Each Siemens SL45 package contains the unit, a user manual and quick-start leaflet, battery pack, multi-media card, combined syncstation and desktop charger, a small and lightweight charger, Microsoft outlook synchronization, MP3 converter, CD Rom, data cable and a PTT (push-to-talk stereo headset with top audio performance).

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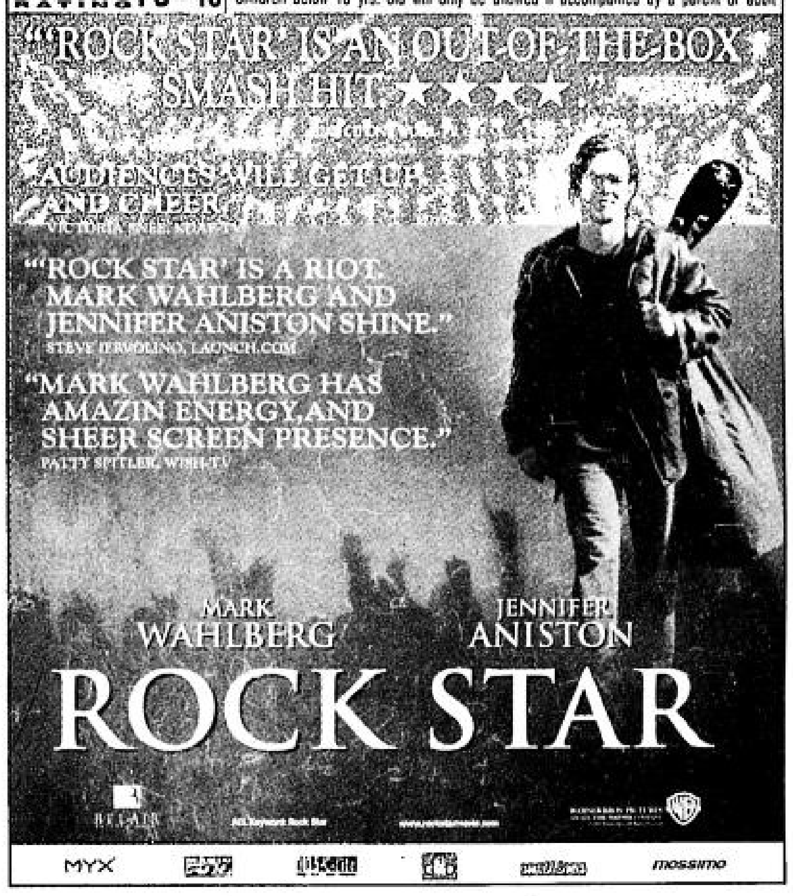
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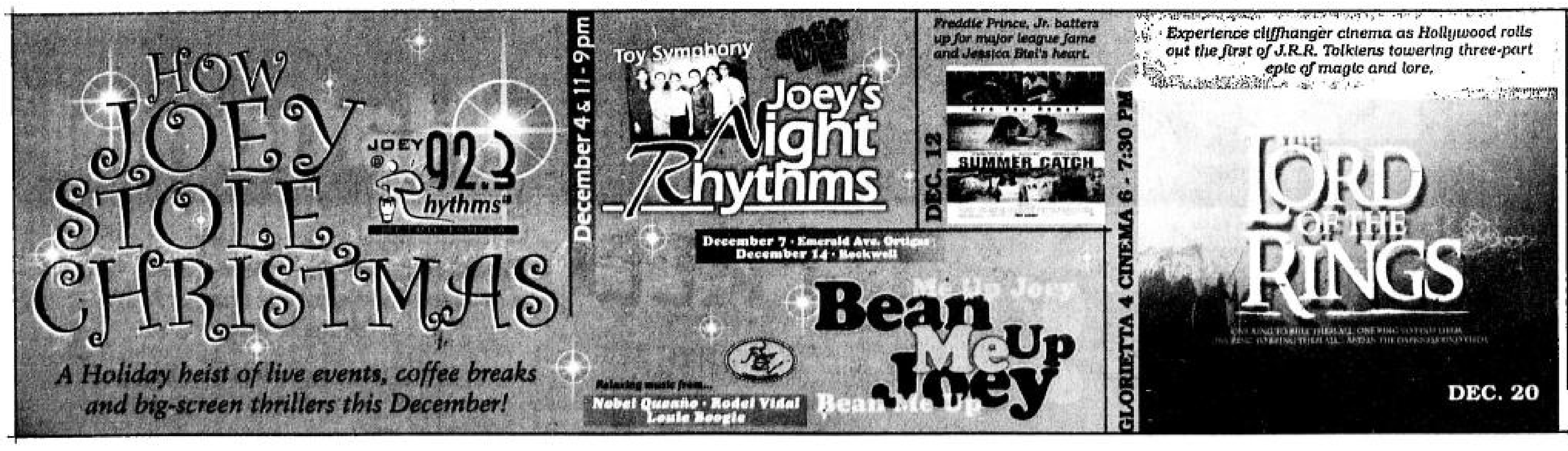
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THE LORD OF THE RINGS
DEC. 20

GRAND DRAW: December 14
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Joey sends two listeners packing for a holiday getaway for **2 to Vienna, Austria and Minneapolis, Minnesota** to the lively Christmas grooves of Bituin Escalante, Calvin Millado, Acoustic Jive, and the cast of RENT!

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ENTERTAINMENT

LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

Romance in all its mushy splendor

KRIS AND TELL

Kris Aquino

I ONLY caught "Serendipity" late Friday night. It's an enjoyable chick flick, and it feeds our collective hope that "somewhere out there is the special someone meant just for me, who will go the extra mile to make what was destined to be a reality."

John Cusack's character has an interesting analogy which relates "Godfather 2" to the original "Godfather" in relation to a man's love for a woman. No matter how beautifully executed Part 2 was (some even argue it was better than the first), you still always have to go back to the original and compare it to the sequel.

In essence, Cusack's character is trying to say that even if you're in a relationship with someone who is special and comfortable enough to be with, there's no denying that part of you will still long for and try to find the one person you shared an inexplicable magic with. You may even wonder why you can't recreate that same magic.

If the film has one flaw that I'd like to nitpick about, it's the fact that both the characters of Cusack and **Kate Beckinsale** have personable and attractive fiancees. There is no unworkable reason that would necessitate a parting of ways.

Beckinsale's intended, played by the actor who plays Aidan in "Sex and the City," is adorable and understanding. Okay, maybe he has unruly hair, but I didn't find anything wrong with his being devoted to his career and being obsessive about his tour schedule. A successful career in music, or any other entertainment-related field, would demand that kind of devotion.

And, come on, their opening scene together is romance in all its mushy splendor, when he presents her with an engagement ring, with the ring box buried inside several wrapped bigger boxes, and the floor is covered in rose petals and so many candles are lit in the living room. If that had happened to me, I'd never even consider leaving the guy.

"Serendipity" is worth your time. The movie could have been a little less relaxed with its pacing, and there are moments when the viewer would feel "enough already, can't the two just be allowed to finally meet?" But overall it is highly enjoyable, and it doesn't run longer than about an hour and 40 minutes.

Take note of Beckinsale's hairstyle in the "present-day" scenes. It's just so attractive. The cut is a little longer than shoulder-length, subtly layered, but very straight, almost like a straightening iron was used on the hair, with just a hint of a flirty back-flip at the very ends. It's feminine and seemingly effortless all at the same time.

Healing aromatherapy

On a totally different note, just this past week, I started suffering from a sinusitis attack. I had aromatherapy-Swedish massage, using eucalyptus essential oil mixed with the carrier massage oil at **James Cooper**'s salon in Valencia Hills, Quezon City.

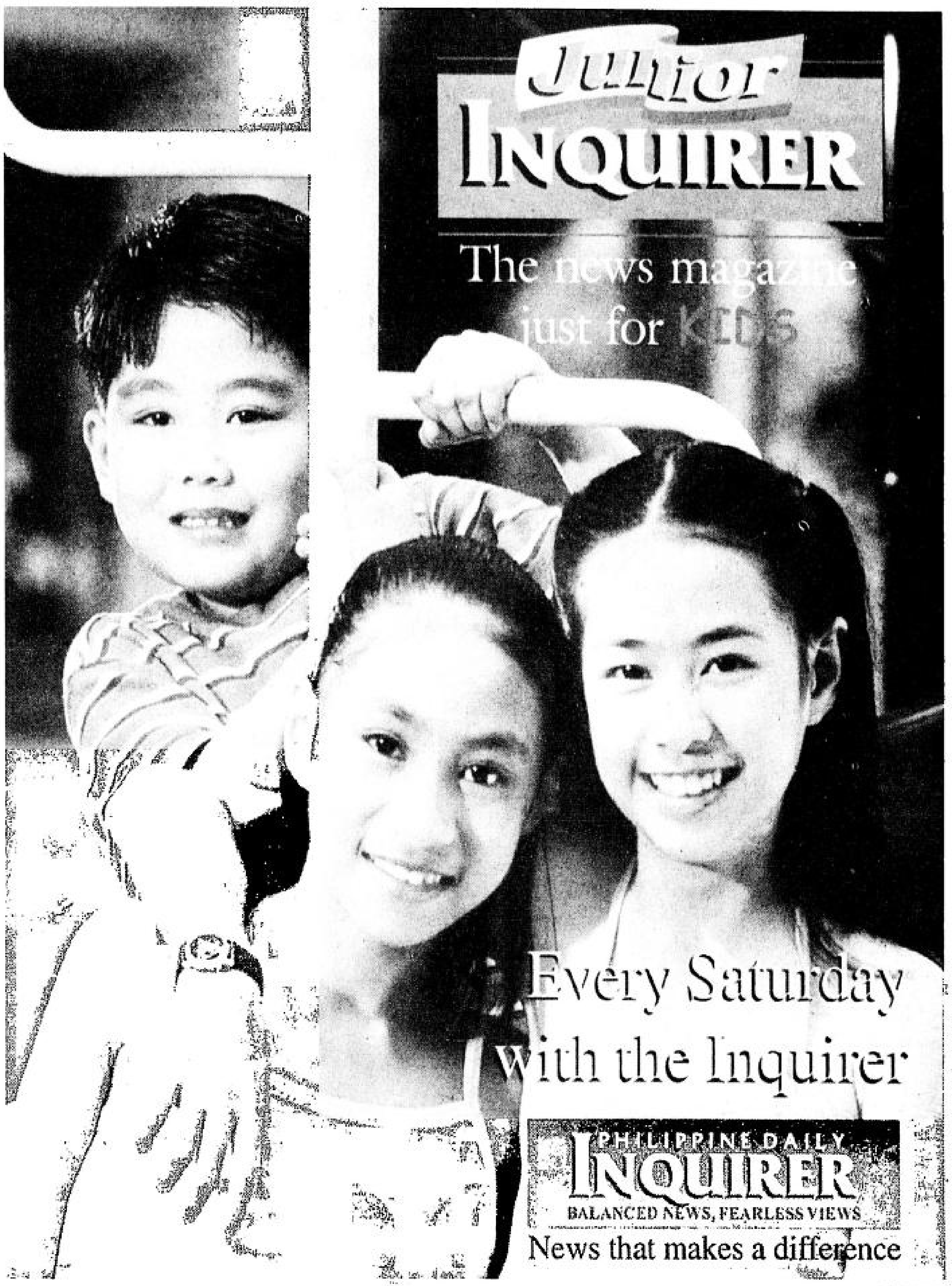
Now, I'm really a believer in the healing powers of aromatherapy.

I went into the massage room with congested and painful sinus passages, a clogged nose, and a sinus headache. After the hour and a half massage session, with some extra time given to massaging the area of my face below my eyes, just above the cheekbones and along my nasal area and temples, I really felt relieved.

By the time I went to sleep that Tuesday night, my sinusitis had all but disappeared.

You might want to attempt a do-it-yourself treatment. I was taught by the people in Body Shop that you can effectively use aromatherapy at home. The formula is always to mix 8 drops of the essential oil for every 10 ml of the carrier oil, preferably a natural, plant-based oil.

Just the other night I gave this a try when I wanted a totally relaxed sleep. I mixed lavender essential oil with my massage oil and rubbed it on, instead of body lotion, after my shower. I don't know if it's psychological, but I slept soundly for 12 hours straight.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Star Cinema goes digital

THREE new Star Cinema movies are set to have invitational screening schedules in two film festivals, first at the Cinemanila 2001 (under the Young Cinema/Digital Program category) from Dec. 7 to 16 at the Greenbelt and Glorietta Cinemas in Makati, and then at the Digital Film Festival MOV at the Gteenbelt Cinema 1 from Jan. 9 to 16, 2002.

They are "Taxi ni Pilo," "ID" and "Angels," with Ricky Lee as creative consultant.

The three films mark breakthrough in filmmaking, digital style, which doesn't use any film at all.

"Digital filmmaking has been around for only a few years," said Cel Samson, head of the Star Cinema's digital production.

"It's an entirely different way of filmmaking, a new technology that has been attracting initially film hobbyist and now, movie producers. This worldwide phenomenon started in Japan and is now making waves both in the USA and Europe. The Philippines isn't left behind."

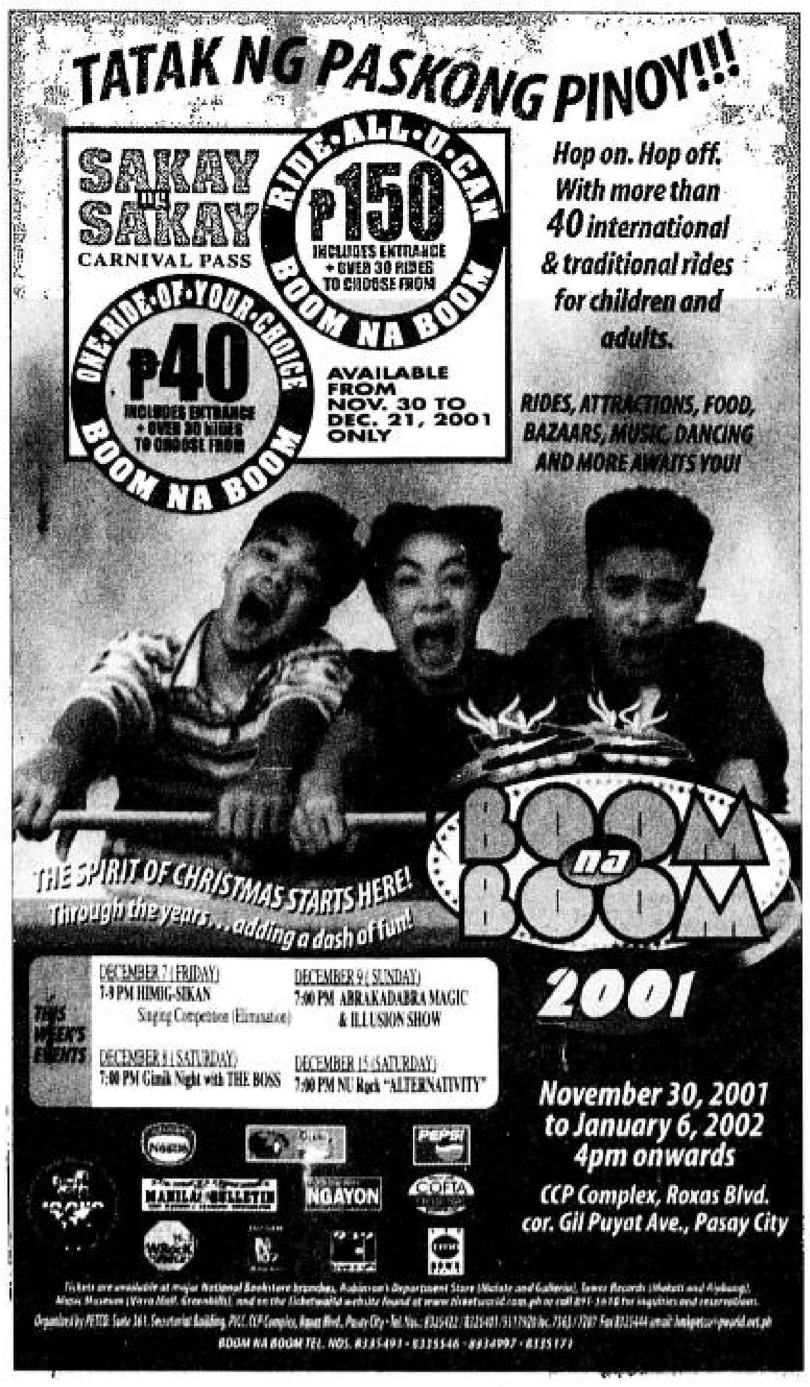
"Taxi ni Pilo" is directed by Milo Paz from a screenplay by Raymond Lee, Melissa Carla, Weng Ragarit and Lucielle Quimbao. The film is a love story starring Joel Torre in the title role, with Lara Fabregas, Paolo Contis, Janette McBride, Baron Geisler and Dominic Ochoa.

"ID" is the story of Rodel de la Paz, played by Ricky Davao, a principled man but a troubled husband. Directed by Gil Portes, the movie also stars Glydel Mercado, BJ de Jesus, Ronnie Lazaro, Ricky Rivero, Richard Quan and Roy Alvarez.

"Angels" is directed by Ellen Ongkeko from a screenplay by Ricky Lee. It is a family drama told from the point of view of Jonathan, played by Angelo Caragay, whose parents are both blind.

Also starring Gina Alajar and Nonie Buencamino as the parents, with Jhoan Tan, Weena Basco and Sylvia Sanchez.

RICKY Davao and Glydel Mercado play husband and wife in Gil Portes' "ID."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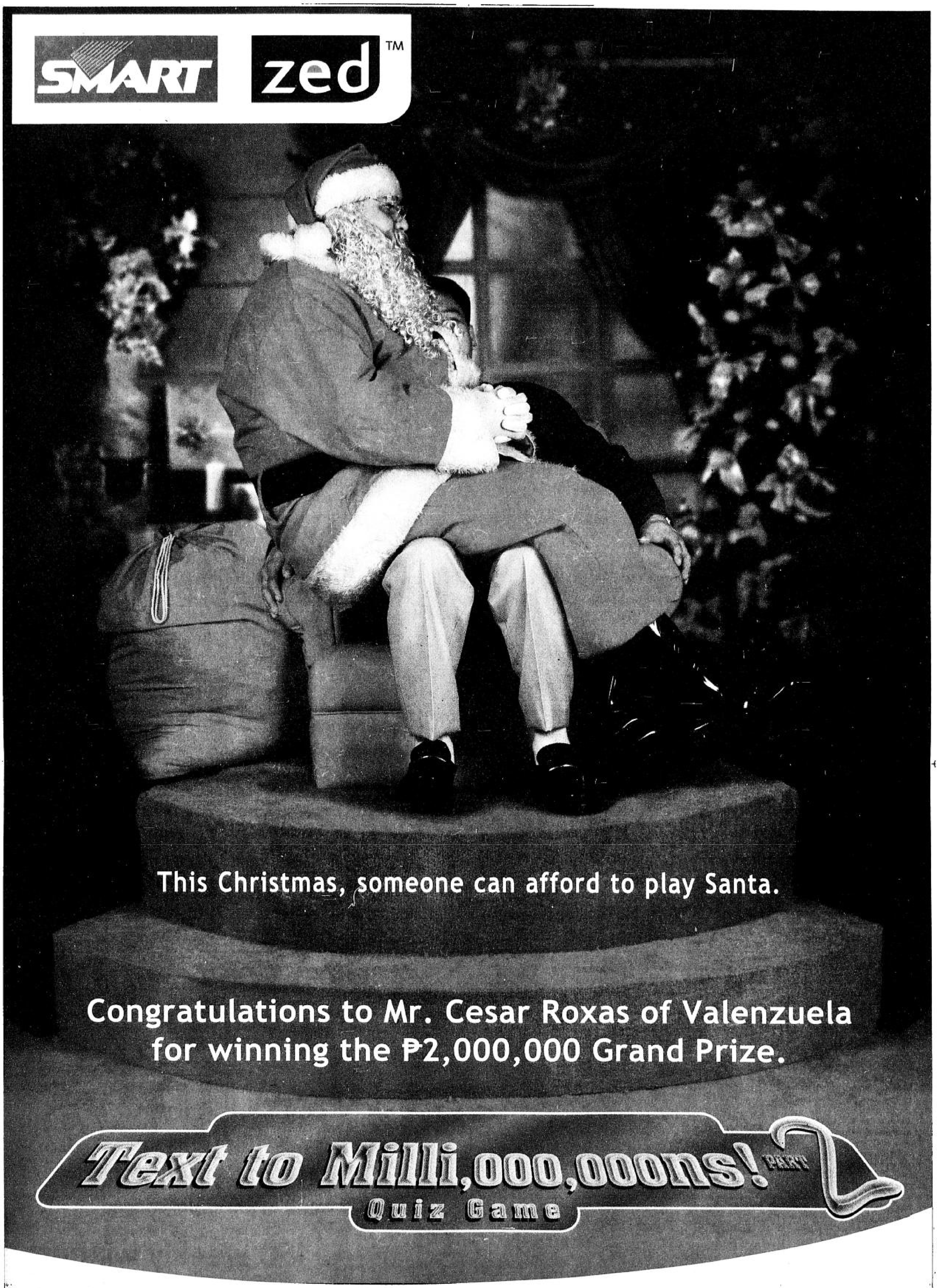

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Belinda Acasio	₱50,000	Week 3 winner	Earl Richardson Chu	₱75,000	Week 6 winner	Minnie F. Fallaria	₱100,000	Week 9 winner
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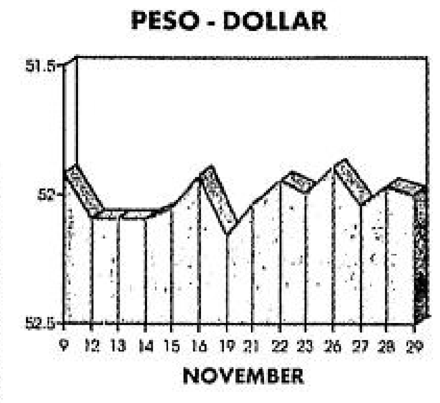

Peso-Dollar Rate

₱ 52.00 = $1
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¥ 123.98 = $1
As of 5 p.m.,
Nov. 30, 2001

GOLD:$274.40/274.90
per ounce Hong Kong,
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Stocks to rise

THE BULLS are still expected to dominate the local stock market for the fourth straight week as investors are becoming more optimistic, although still generally cautious, on the prospects for the domestic economy and the global war on terrorism.

This developed as the National Economic and Development Authority announced last week a gross domestic product growth of 2.9 percent in the third quarter of the year despite the global slowdown, boosting expectations that the Philippines would avoid the recession now hounding the United States, Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

(See story on Page B6.)

BY GIL C. CABACUNGAN JR.

SWISS food giant Nestlé warned the Macapagal administration that it would defer a P3-billion expansion program in the Philippines because of an impending labor strike at its Cabuyao, Laguna, plant.

Trade Secretary Manuel Roxas II said Nestlé Philippines Inc.'s labor union has filed two notices of strike with the Department of Labor and Employment, and that the Laguna plant was in danger of being forcibly shuttered by this protest action.

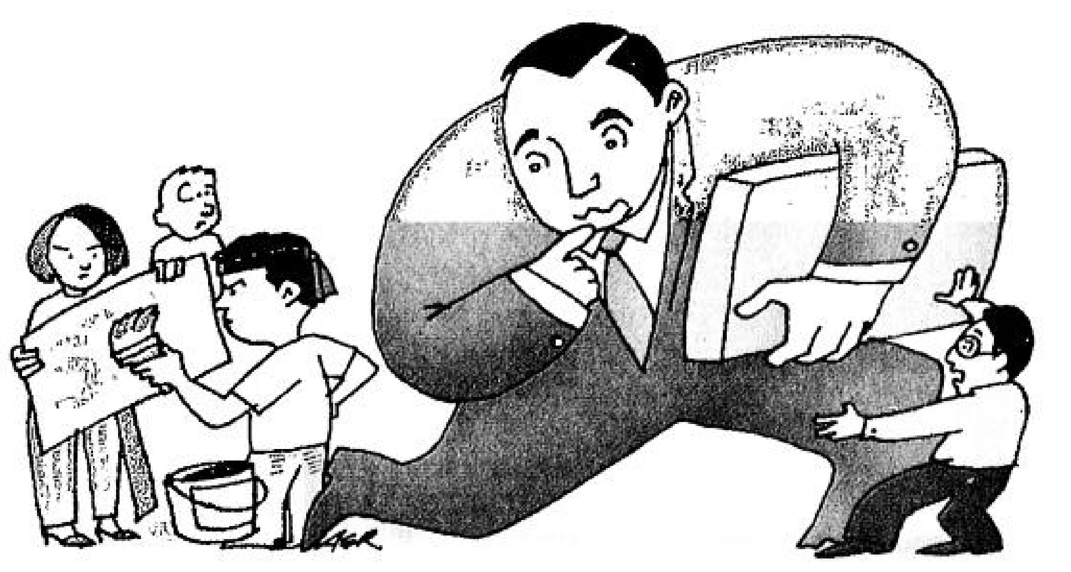
Roxas said this has made Nestlé reconsider its expansion plans that would have made the country its production center for infant formula milk in the region when tariffs on intra-regional trade are lowered to between zero and 5 percent with the Asean Free Trade Area in 2003.

Roxas said the government has taken a direct hand in mediating between labor and management in view of the substantial investments (P3 billion) and new jobs (5,000) on the line if Nestlé's Laguna factory is paralyzed by the labor strike. He said the stakes were just too high to let the matter be resolved through the regular DOLE intervention.

He said the Swiss food giant urged the government to ensure a more stable labor environment in the country because any disruption in its Laguna plant would affect its supply chain not only in the Philippines but throughout the region. Nestlé plans to sell its infant formula products from the Philippines to Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam and Singapore.

The potential Nestlé strike is the latest manifestation of the growing restiveness of labor unions in the country which foreign investors, notably Japanese businessmen, complained has been on the rise since the Estrada administration was toppled in Edsa II in January this year.

Labor strikes have already stalled operations of Toyota Motor Philippines Corp. and Nissan Motor Philippines Inc. this year, and their owners have likewise shown their frustration at the government for its inability to throw the book at workers because of the political implications of such a move.



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Gov't plans to invest in $500-M rehab fund

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE MACAPAGAL administration, through state-owned financial institutions, is planning to invest in the $500-million corporate recovery fund that US firm Cerberus Ltd, has vowed to put up in the country.

Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho said that since the fund was not meant to be a bailout but would be put up with the intention of generating profit, it could be a wise investment outlet for the government financial institutions.

However, he said the level of the planned participation has not yet been discussed.

Cerberus Ltd. is reputed to be the second largest corporate restructuring firm in the United States with $7 billion worth of funds in its portfolio.

The company has forged two separate memorandums of understanding with the Philippine government worth $1.5 billion during the state visit of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

The $500-million MOU, according to Camacho, was to put up a Philippine business recovery fund that would be used to facilitate the restructuring of distressed local companies.

Camacho said the fund would be used to pump in fresh equity into selected companies whose line of business remained viable but may have been hit financially because of the slowdown in the global economy, the weakness in the local currency and high interest rates.

"In corporate restructuring, Cerberus may offer what is needed by the distressed firm. It could pump in equity if that is what the company needs," the finance chief said.

The other MOU, according to Camacho, was an understanding that Cerberus may acquire about $1 billion of the government's housing mortgages.

The government, through agencies like the Pag-Ibig Fund and Home Guaranty Corp., has more than P100 billion worth of mortgages that it could sell to an asset-management company like Cerberus.

Camacho said the fund was only set at $1 billion because the US firm would naturally offer to buy the housing portfolio at a discount.

He said Cerberus' timing of investing in the Philippines could coincide with the enactment of a law that would give asset management firms incentives to do business restructuring in the country and to unburden locally operating banks of their nonperforming loans that had reached P281.83 billion as of September.

A pending bill on AMCs provides for an exemption from the 6-percent capital gains tax on the transfer of property and also allows foreign groups to lease real property over a long period.

"If Cerberus would be successful, it could provide the right resource in restructuring distressed firms and also help the banking sector reduce its NPLs," the finance secretary noted.

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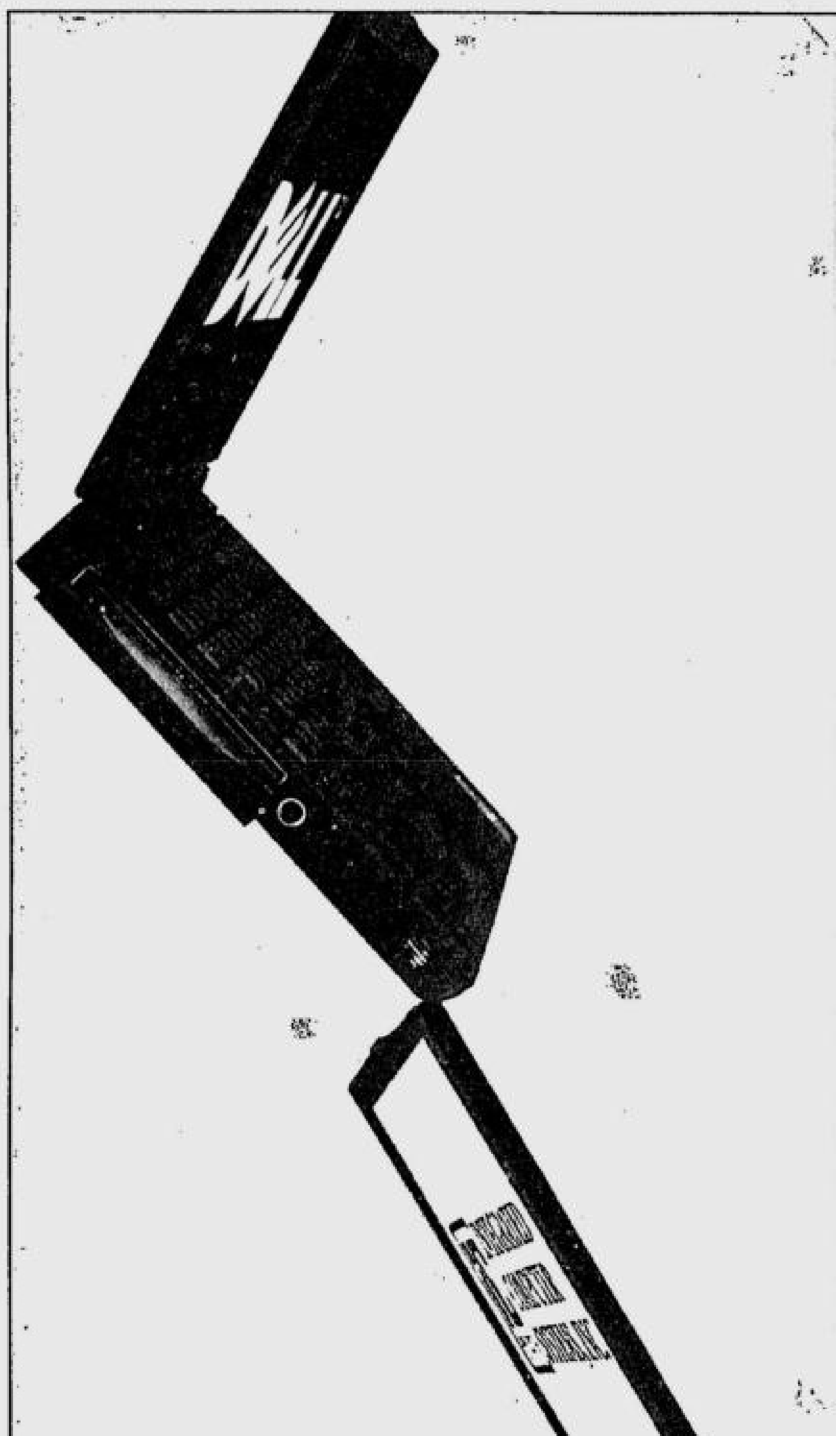

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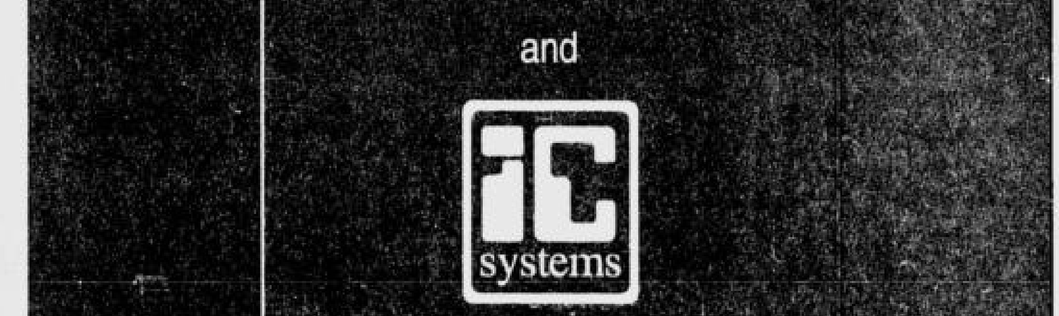

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Napocor's fund requirements fully covered

By Ronnel W. Domingo

NATIONAL Power Corp.'s financial needs for 2001 amounting to $530 million are as good as fully covered with the recent issuance of a $500-million eurobond, the president of the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. said last week.

Psalm chief Edgardo del Fonso said the Department of Finance has secured the bond issuance and that the entire $500 million would go to Napocor.

Created under the Electric Power Industry Reform Act, Psalm would completely take over by Dec. 27 all of Napocor's disposable assets and assume its financial obligations as of end-2000.

"We expect to get hold of the fund within this month," Del Fonso told reporters.

Asked about the remaining $30 million of Napocor's financing needs, he said this would be secured through short-term bridge financing from local banks.

"Securing the balance would not be so difficult because we still have open credit lines with local banks," Del Fonso explained.

He said that while the $530-million funding was not yet available, Psalm was "making ends meet."

He also said that the amount would cover Napocor's $144-million loan obligation to ING Barings that has recently matured.

On the other hand, he said the rest of the fund has no particular allocations yet.

"This would then be like a kitty where we could draw as the need arises," Del Fonso said.

Last month, National Treasurer Sergio Edeza announced that the Treasury had advanced P10 billion to Napocor and would extend another P1 billion in loans next year.

Edeza said the power firm had settled P800 million of its P4.5 billion in advances last September.

The latest advances were made in view of the failure of US-based investment firm Bear Stearns to arrange a $400-million placement for Napocor.

The Treasury had also issued in September three-month bonds worth P3-billion to bridge-finance Napocor's operating needs and other projects.

Before that, the government had planned to tap HSBC as lead arranger for a $200-million private placement in behalf of Napocor.

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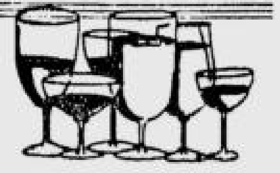
Marcelo's milieu

COCKTALES



By Victor C. Agustin

THE OPPOSITION has been hell-bent in pushing for a Blue Ribbon investigation about the allegations of telecom consultant Pacifico Marcelo III, without realizing that the houses that Marcelo could bring down could be that of their congressional colleagues and their business allies.

If Marcelo ever goes on the witness stand, expect the Marcos-Erap cronies at the sequestered Philippine Communications Satellite Corp. to get whiplashed.

Why?

Consider these:

- Rep. Augusto Baculio, the sponsor of the controversial Marcelo franchise, is the personal lawyer of Ma. Erlinda Ilusorio-Bildner, another American who sits on the board of Philcomsat like his client Marcelo.
- Sen. Vicente Sotto, another Erap ally like Baculio, shepherded the Marcelo franchise in the Senate.
- Mario Raval, the chief of staff of Sen. Edgardo Angara and part-time speechwriter for Sen. Pánfilo Lacson, is also another personal lawyer of Ilusorio-Bildner. It was, in fact, Raval who introduced Baculio to Bildner.
- Lacson's security agency provided the blue guards at the Philcomsat office building on Buendia when Lacson was still PNP chief. The security contract was abruptly terminated after Edsa II.
- Lacson's ex-intelligence operative, Florinda Estrada, sold 36.6 hectares of spuriously titled land in Cavite to Philcomsat for P236 million.
- The Philcomsat parent company approved the "sale" of its Citation II jet in exchange for 100 Baguio Country Club shares. Baguio Country Club president Federico Agcaoili also sits on the Philcomsat board, another Erap appointee like Marcelo.
- The current Philcomsat chair, Carmelo Africa Jr., another Erap appointee, is a drinking buddy of Jinggoy Estrada. Africa rented a Philcomsat property in Mandaluyong as well as office space in the Buendia headquarters but has been erratic in rental payments despite the friendly lease terms.
- The corporate secretary of Philcomsat is Amado Santiago, the second man who was present in the office of Erap lawyer Estelito Mendoza when then Equitable-PCIBank president George Go attempted to persuade key impeachment witness Clarissa Ocampo to alter the Jose Velarde trail away from Malacañang.
- Ex-Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile likewise has a seat on the Philcomsat board, represented by his daughter Katrina.
- A director of Marcelo's telecom company, Leah Ledesma, was until recently an assistant

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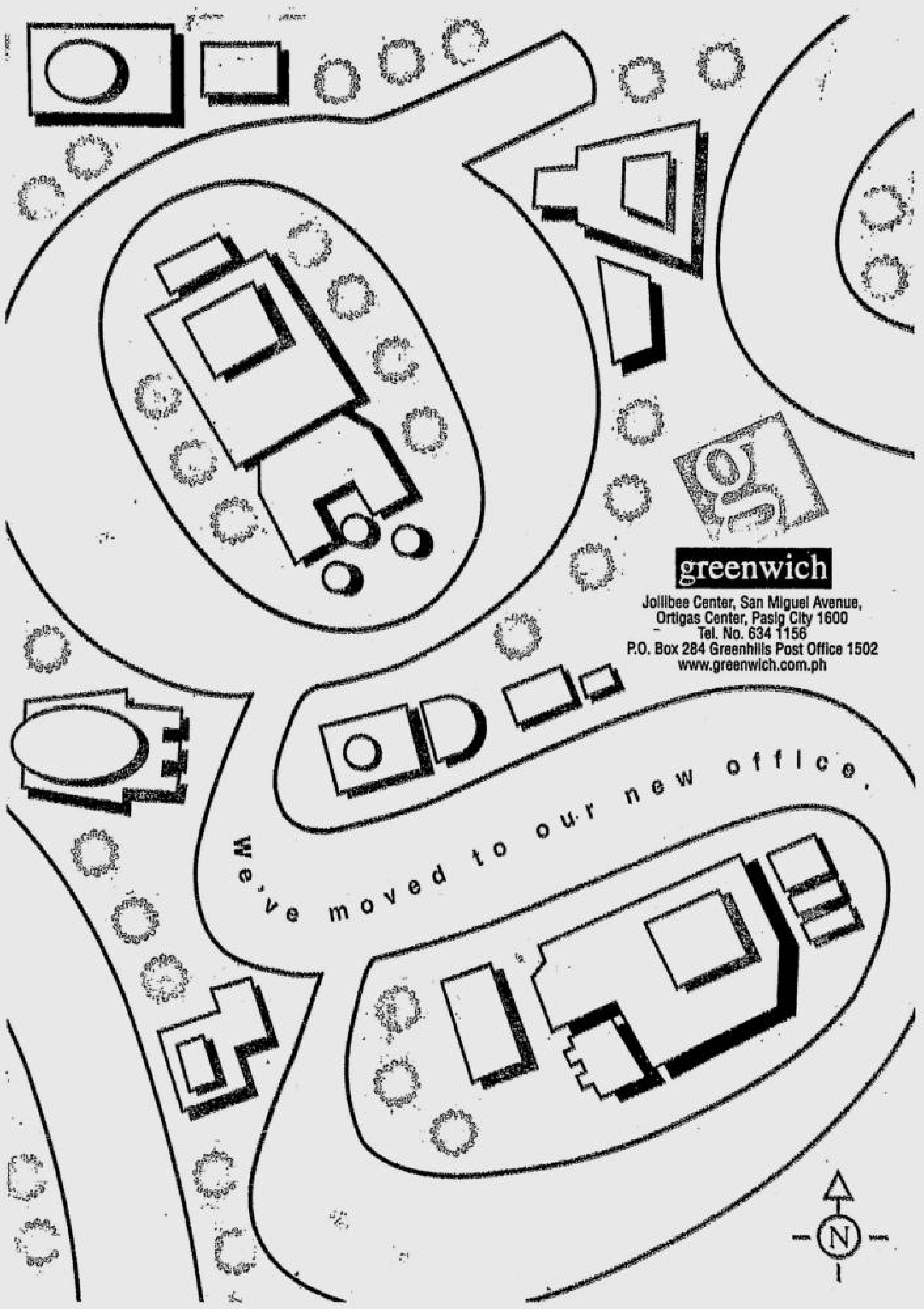

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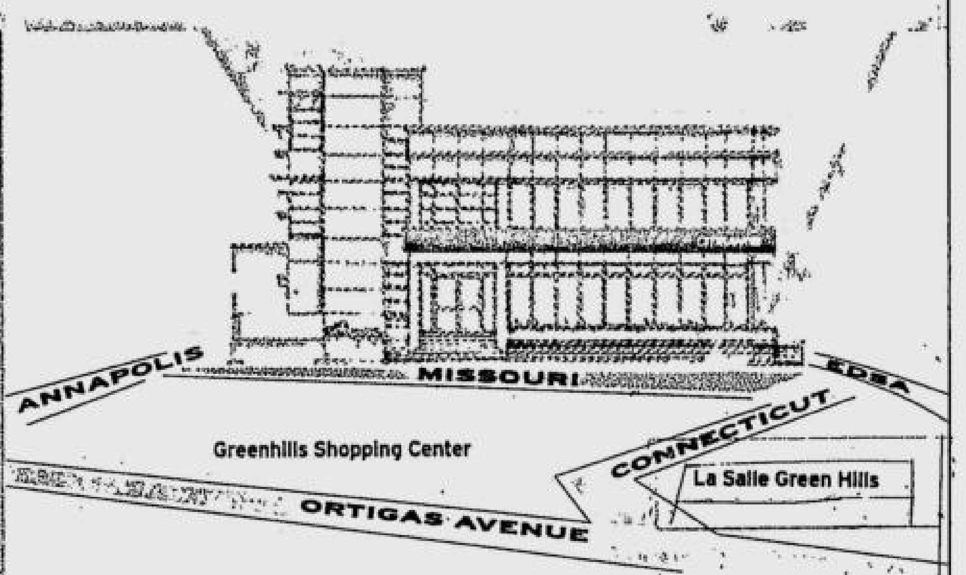

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SEC order seen prodding brokers to resume trading

By Elena R. Torrijos

IN A move that could prod brokers closing up shop to immediately resume operations, the Securities and Exchange Commission approved last Thursday a resolution refusing to renew the licenses of stockbrokers that have voluntarily suspended or ceased their operations.

In a press briefing, SEC Chair Lilia Bautista said that unless they resume operations, these brokers would have to reapply for licenses subject to the new SEC rules requiring, among others, a minimum capital of P100 million for new stockbrokerages.

The SEC's resolution, to be confirmed this week, was triggered by a request by HSBC Securities that it be allowed to renew its license even though it has decided to stop operations due to the low trading volume in the Philippine Stock Exchange.

To operate, currently licensed brokers must have a net capital of P5 million, file transaction and other reports and need to employ at least one salesperson and one associated person.

Employing a skeletal force while waiting for the country's stock market to improve could be a more practical alternative for brokers to consider rather than stopping operations now and coming back at a better time given the high capital requirement to reenter the local market, SEC officials noted.

This year saw several foreign brokerage houses pull out of the country. They blamed poor market conditions stemming from political and economic reasons for their decision to suspend local operations rather than the Securities Regulation Code enacted last year.

In particular, foreign brokers said they decided to suspend or cease their trading operations in the country because of the failure of the stock market to generate a critical volume level necessary to break even.

Documents showed that out of the country's 184 stockbrokers, eight were inactive, 23 were under voluntary suspension and four have ceased operation. This list, however, still did not include HSBC Securities, Worldsec Securities, G.K. Goh Securities and Guoco Securities which have recently said they would not operate anymore.

P45-B CASH

Gov't plans to cancel 2 Treasury auctions

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE BUREAU of Treasury is planning to cancel the last two auctions this year for treasury bills and bonds as it already expects to end the year with P45 billion in free cash, the money it will have in its hands after maturing government bills have been paid.

National Treasurer Sergio Edeza said the P45 billion in unrestricted cash would come from the P15-billion payment of National Power Corp. for its advances and from the proceeds of a $406-million yen borrowing that would be used for next year's budget.

He added that the proceeds of the last two auctions would likely be treated as free cash already.

In today's auction, Edeza said he expected treasury bill yields to decline by another 0.10 percentage point across the board in anticipation that the fixed-income market would start to discount a promise made by the central bank that it would cut overnight rates this coming week.

"The hint of the governor is a clear statement to the market and I think he will do it if the condition of the market permits it," Edeza said.

Bangko Sentral Governor Rafael Buenaventura said the Monetary Board was seriously considering a cut in its policy rates this week once the inflation numbers for November would confirm a declining trend in consumer prices.

Edeza said his conservative projection of only a 0.10-percentage point decline in treasury bill rates was due to the fact that yields across all tenors have dropped significantly for three straight weeks.

"The market is also opportunistic. But while I said the cut in rates may not be as significant as the previous weeks, the difference between the 91-day treasury bill yield and the overnight rates remains wide, which means there is a lot of room for T-bill rates to go down," the national treasurer explained.

The 91-day treasury bill rate stood at 9.298 percent in last week's auction, its lowest level in four months, while the central bank's overnight borrowing rate is currently at 8.25 percent, its lowest level in five years.

In the last three weeks, the benchmark borrowing rate had slid by 61.4 basis points (0.614 percentage point) following a half-a-percentage point cut in the BSP rates last Nov. 11 and speculation that the central bank would reduce banks' reserve requirement.

It also helped that the budget deficit as of October stood at P133.319 billion or P4.384 billion lower than the programmed amount of P137.703 billion for the first 10 months of the year.

The yield of the six-month treasury bill is at 10.453 percent and the one-year instrument at 11.242 percent during the last auction. The longer dated treasuries have shed 1.726 percentage points and 1.82 percentage points in the last three auctions.

The government's estimated cash position of P45 billion by year's end is higher by P25 billion compared to its free cash as of early November of P20 billion.

Edeza earlier said the ideal level of free cash should only be about P30 billion because anything more than that meant the government was paying interest for funds it did not need.

"In a disciplined government, the free cash can go as low as P5 billion," Edeza pointed out.

The national treasurer said he was confident the government could meet its P145-billion deficit target this year and this would allow the Treasury to improve its cash position, an indicator that signals the market as to how banks should price their bids for the treasuries.

Cocktales

(From page B3)

vice president for marketing of a Philcomsat subsidiary.

Kinks on Kirin

DESPITE being the country's largest food, beverage, and packaging conglomerate, the publicly listed San Miguel Corp. has strangely not held any board meeting in the past two months, according to the pro-government grapevine.

Because of the absence of board meetings, SSS president Corazon de la Paz, one of the seven government representatives, only got wind of the major joint venture proposal between Kirin of Japan and San Miguel through newspaper accounts.

The government theoretically controls seven out of the 15 board seats, but five of the seven are being held by Erap nominees who refuse to vacate their seats and apparently do not even bother to report to either Malacañang or PCGG Chair Haydee Yorac.

Shunted to Sangley

THE HANGARS of general aviation companies presently scattered along the perimeter of the Manila domestic airport will most likely be transferred to the Sangley air base in Cavite when the new Terminal 3 shall have been finished.

General Manager Edgardo Manda of the Manila International Airport Authority, which favors Sangley over Clark for the transfer because of nearness to Makati/Pasay, where most of these charter/private aircraft firms are based, has been rounding up support from the transport committees of both the Senate and the House precisely for the purpose.

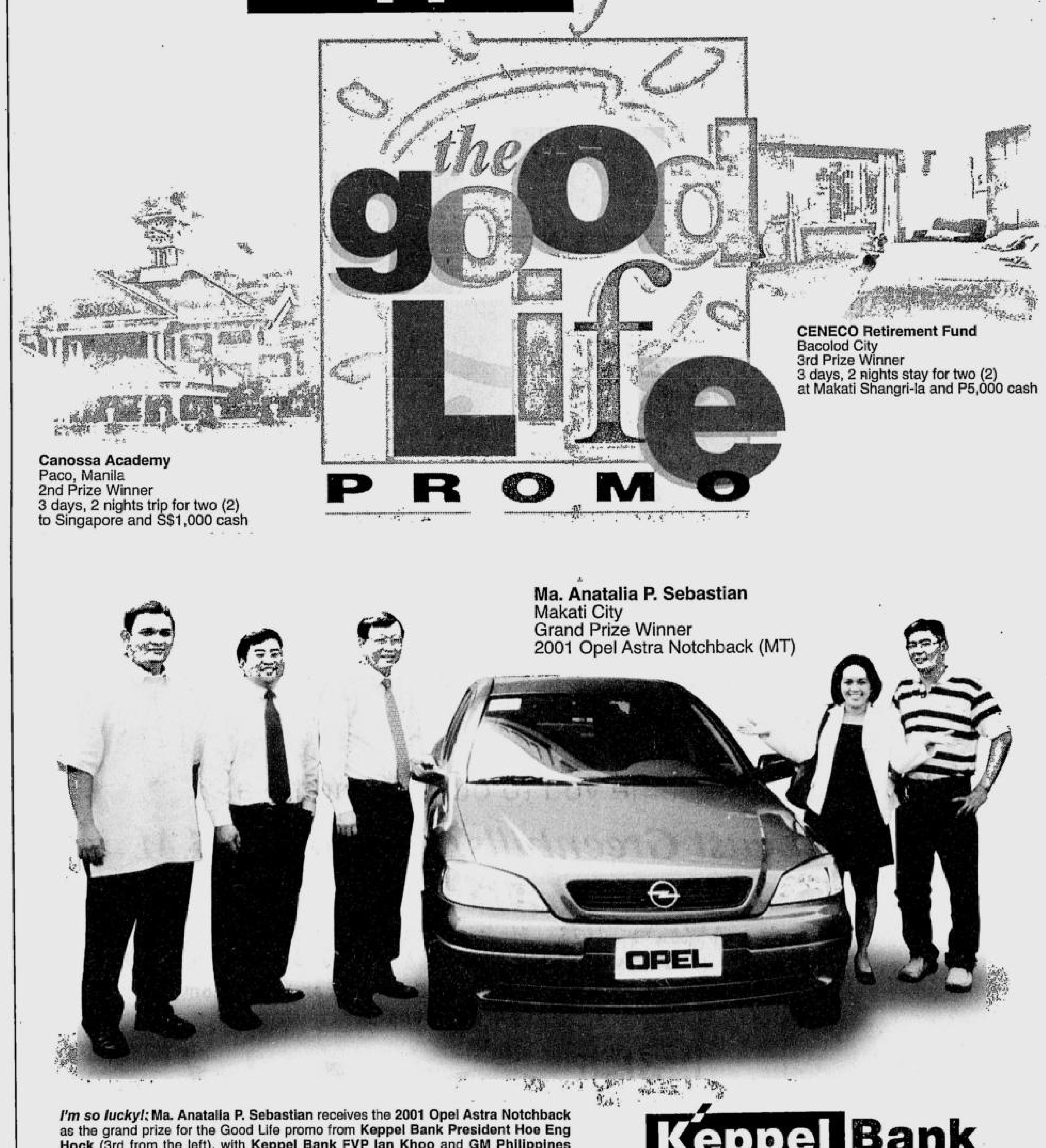
Heard through the grapevine

MEGAWORLD is building a total of 14 residential condominiums along the Manila Golf Club perimeter fence between the Pacific Plaza Towers and the Bonifacio Ridge condos. That stretch of property has been recently sold to a consortium led by realtor Carlos "Charlie" Rufino, who consequently had to resign his position at the Fort Bonifacio Development Corp.

Megaworld is building the condos in a joint venture with the Rufino consortium, which will provide the land in exchange for condo units.

In contrast with its affluent neighbors, Megaworld will continue with its trademark condo sizing/pricing strategy for the ambitious Fort project.

(Cocktales may be reached by e-mail at cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com or at cocktales_pdi@hotmail.com.)



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Bangko Sentral readies reduction in bank reserves

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas is poised to cut the reserve requirement on banks by as much as 2 percentage points from 20 percent as early as this week, according to its governor, Rafael Buenaventura.

"There has been a suggestion for the Monetary Board to cut the liquidity reserves by 2 percentage points. This would be discussed by the board in its next meeting (this Thursday)," the central bank chief said.

Buenaventura had said that monetary authorities would likely cut the banks' mandated reserves in the coming weeks, but that the Monetary Board would decide as to how much and when it would be implemented.

He said the board has already asked the central bank's research team to determine if the growth in money supply was sufficient for the economy until the next quarter.

The Bangko Sentral had increased the banks' reserve requirement in late July and in early August to 20 percent. These moves mopped up about P55 billion in excess money from the system which was suspected of having been used to speculate against the peso and could have pushed up inflation during the period.

The central bank governor added that monetary authorities would likely cut the Bangko Sentral's overnight rates this week.

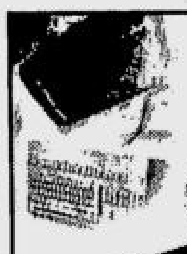
A cut in policy rates and even in the banks' reserve requirement will unleash funds into the system that can, in turn, be used to spur growth and consumer spending. However, it could also lead to higher interest rates and a more volatile local currency.

Sources said the central bank had been soliciting inputs from the banking sector as to how much excess liquidity was floating in the system and whether it was time to ease the reserve requirement of 20 percent by one to 2 percentage points.

A 2-percentage-point cut would free up about P28 billion in funds into the system.

"The board wanted to be certain about the level of money supply and if this is compatible with the pace of the economic growth in the quarters to come not just for the current period," Buenaventura said.

Of the 20-percent reserve requirement, 11 percent represents the liquidity reserves (which earn market-based interest rates) while the remaining 9 percent is called the statutory reserves that earn below-market rates. Banks, in effect, are required to set aside 20 centavos as reserve for every peso of their loanable funds.



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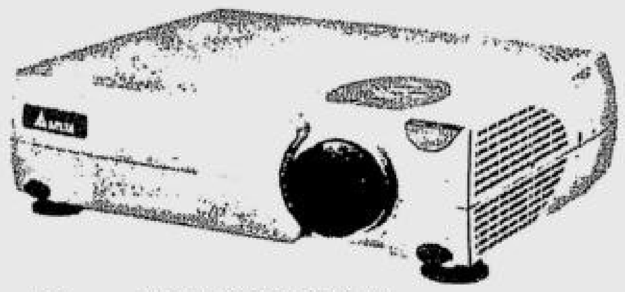

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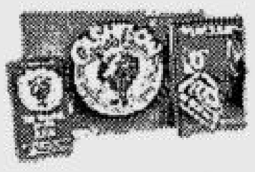
GuocoHoldings (Philippines), Inc.

TO ALL STOCKHOLDERS:

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Annual Meeting of the Stockholders of Guoco Holdings (Philippines), Inc. will be held on 20 December 2001 at 10:00 a.m. at the Penthouse, Lepanto Building, 8747 Paseo de Roxas, Makati City.

(Sgd.) Atty. Daisy L. Parker
Corporate Secretary



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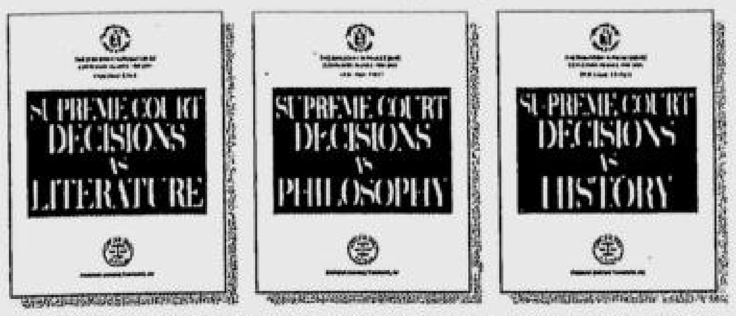
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Stocks seen to continue rally on growing optimism

By Doris C. Dumlao

MARKET PLAY

THE BULLS are still expected to dominate the local stock market for the fourth straight week as investors are becoming more optimistic, although still generally cautious, on the prospects for the domestic economy and the global war on terrorism.

This developed as the National Economic and Development Authority announced last week a gross domestic product growth of 2.9 percent in the third quarter of the year despite the global slowdown, boosting expectations that the Philippines would avoid the recession now hounding the United States, Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Although the latest GDP figure indicated a slowdown compared to the revised second-quarter growth of 3.2 percent and the 4.6 percent level chalked up in the same quarter of last year, it was slightly better than the 2.8 percent expected by the government and private economists for the period.

2-month high

Meanwhile, the main-share Philippine Stock Exchange rebounded to its highest level in almost two months, gaining 40.01 points or 3.68 percent last week to close at 1,128.47 on Friday.

Eagle Equities president Joseph Roxas said the positive momentum would continue in the market this week as local stocks would attempt to recover losses incurred after the terrorist attacks in the United States.

"All of the other markets are back to where they were before Sept 11. We were trading at 1,294 then and we're still away from that level," Roxas said.

"The question is, are we better off or worse off before then? We are a bit worse off but because of the economic package obtained by GMA (President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo), we'll be better off because that will give the fiscal stimulus that we ourselves can't provide," he said.

Roxas said he would not be surprised if US retailing giant Walmart itself regained interest in investing in the country or even buy into the ailing Uniwide Holdings Inc.

Among the gainers last week were Philippine Long Distance and Telephone Co., Equitable PCI Bank, ABS CBN Broadcasting Corp., Petron Corp., Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co. Aboitiz Equity Ventures, JG Summit and La Tondeña Distillers Inc.

The losers, on the other hand, included SM Prime Holdings Inc., San Miguel Corp., Bank of the Philippine Islands, San Miguel Corp. "B", Jollibee Foods Corp., First Philippine Holdings, Union Cement Corp. and Meralco "B".

"The strength of the market has certainly been proven with convincing breaks above successive resistance levels. Investor mood is positive and the market is likely to consolidate at current levels. However, a break to levels seen early this year will certainly depend on corporate performances in the months to come," BPI Securities analyst Spencer Yap said.

"We expect the market to continue to move higher this week. However, the trading pattern over the past two days suggests the possibility of a pullback. Issue-specific developments will determine the movement of specific stocks this week," he said.

He noted that the market might correct as the Phisix nears the 1,165 to 1,170 resistance zones.

Momentum

"Nevertheless, rising momentum so far should continue to fuel an uptrend. As such, if momentum does not kink, a decisive break of 1,170 may fuel advance toward 1,230," he said. "Key resistance however lies in 1,290 as breach may mean that the run is sustainable towards this year's high. Look for supports around the 1,070-1,080 area.".

AB Capital Securities analyst Jose Vistan said a correction at this point could be considered technically healthy, although noting that the downside would be limited as the 1,050 support level would likely hold.

"Our current volume indicators reflect very strong flows into the market. Volume is on the rise as the market gains strength while descending bottoms were accompanied by thinning volume," he said.

"While profit-taking is expected, the market's seasonal strength should generally continue. As long as there won't be any fresh negative surprise, money will flow back into stocks this December as investors gear up for the seasonal yearend window-dressing. The present momentum together with a seasonal December rally could propel the Phisix back to the 1,250 level by yearend," Vistan said.

But the market's future prospects, Vistan said, remained uncertain, noting that the current rebound merely appeared to be short-term reversals.

"There is no clear hint of an upcoming bull market. The current run-up can develop into a medium-term rebound or it could just fizzle out and the bears will continue to lord over the market. We should be wary of a bear market rally, which can trap new confidence and money. We have to remember that a powerful bear market rally is not a bull market," he warned.

Proxy war seen hitting Interport anew

A PROXY war for control of publicly listed real estate company Interport Resources Inc. is brewing between key local stockholders and Malaysian firm T&M Holding.

In an interview, IRC director Alexander Asuncion said local shareholders were protesting the allegedly "fraudulent" attempt of T&M Holdings, which is owned by Malaysian national Lee Seng Chay, to wrest control of the company.

"Their ploy is to use unsuspecting small IRC shareholders to gain control of the company during the stockholders' meeting," Asuncion said.

He said criminal and civil charges were now being prepared against T&M Holding.

The group of Asuncion, along with other IRC directors Ruben del Rosario and Vicente de Vera, owns about 35 percent of the company's 40 billion issued shares.

He said his group earlier advanced P100 million to IRC with the understanding that this would be converted into shares. But now that the price of the stock has gone down, he said T&M Holding, which has a 26-percent stake in the company, would not consent to the conversion as this would give his group an absolute majority control of IRC.

On the other hand, Asuncion claimed T&M Holding had duped another minority shareholder, Cebu-based trader Tan Chan, to transfer his 13-percent stake in the company so that the Malaysian firm would become the single biggest stockholder with a 39-percent stake.

But he said Tan Chan was allegedly never paid for his shares and was now likewise going to court against T&M Holding.

Claiming "misrepresentation" of shareholders, Asuncion alleged that T&M Holding was able to convince the Securities and Exchange Commission to allow the holding of a stockholders' meeting so that they would install their own officers.

He said the Malaysian group was able to open a stockholders' meeting last Nov. 15 but this was adjourned due to lack of quorum. But Asuncion said the group was bent on holding another meeting on Dec. 10.

"Mr. Lee Seng Chay and his group, in petitioning the SEC to set a stockholders' meeting of IRC, withheld from the regulatory body the fact that T&M Holding is a foreign-controlled firm," De Vera said.

He noted that since IRC's main asset was a 2,200-hectare land in Angono, Rizal, T&M Holding was barred from legally gaining control and ownership of the company.

The Philippine Constitution prohibits foreigners from owning land in the country.

"We cannot allow T&M Holding to make a mockery of our laws and trample on the rights of legitimate IRC shareholders. We will make sure they would be made accountable," they said in a joint statement.

Asked about what he believed was T&M Holding's motive, Asuncion said: "They want to make money by making a stock play on IRC." *Doris Dumlao*

Philippine Stock Exchange

(As of Thursday, November 29, 2001)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Bank of the Phil. Islands	53	53.5	51.5	51.5	181,700
China Banking Corp.	510	510	510	510	530
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	22.75	24.75	22.75	24	1,126,100
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	179	180	175	176	48,190
Philippine National Bank	48.5	49	48.5	49	167,500
Phil. Savings Bank	28	29	28	29	10,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	15	16	15	15	365,700
FINANCIAL SERVICE					
First Metro Invest. Corp.	240	240	240	240	100
Manulife Financial Corp.	1350	1350	1350	1350	1,480
Sun Life Financial Serv.	1160	1160	1140	1145	14,850
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	26.5	26.5	25.5	25.5	8,900
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.4	0.42	0.4	0.42	4,670,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	570	570	570	570	2,540
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.028	0.03	0.028	0.028	4,500,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.49	0.49	0.49	0.49	300,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	1,000
Piltel	0.35	0.37	0.35	0.37	28,100,000
Phil. Telegraph & Tel. Co.	0.22	0.225	0.22	0.225	110,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	422.5	430	422.5	427.5	155,140
Ivantage Corp.	0.6	0.67	0.6	0.65	680,000
Philweb.Com Inc.	0.022	0.022	0.021	0.022	214,000,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	24.75	24.75	24.5	24.5	113,100
Manila Electric Co. B	31	33	31	32	952,900
Petron Corp.	1.5	1.54	1.46	1.5	12,034,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.84	0.84	0.84	0.84	80,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1	1	1	1	20,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	1.7	1.76	1.66	1.72	12,110,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.25	0.32	0.25	0.28	160,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.3	1.4	1.3	1.4	20,000
Union Cement Corp.	0.95	0.96	0.94	0.95	440,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	10,000
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	5.8	5.8	5.8	5.8	180,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	12.25	12.75	12.25	12.75	521,100
La Tondena Distillers Inc.	24.75	24.75	23.75	24.25	52,100
RFM Corp.	2.02	2.18	2.02	2.16	8,136,000
San Miguel Corp. A	41.5	41.5	41	41.5	315,800
San Miguel Corp. B	51.5	51.5	51.5	51.5	130,800
Universal Robina Corp.	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	1,402,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.61	0.61	0.59	0.59	30,000
Ayala Corp.	4.85	5.1	4.85	5	13,983,000
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.09	100,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	1.46	1.56	1.46	1.48	4,718,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.77	0.77	0.74	0.77	2,010,000
APC Group Inc.	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	200,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	31,000,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	8	9.7	8	9.7	14,000
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	50,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.78	0.83	0.76	0.78	23,710,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.06	0.065	0.06	0.065	28,800,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.2	0.22	0.2	0.21	12,350,000
Ebecom Holdings Inc.	0.1	0.11	0.1	0.105	1,400,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1	1	0.95	0.95	800,000
Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp.	2.08	2.1	2.08	2.1	18,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	26	28	26	27	432,000
Global Equities Inc.	0.12	0.14	0.12	0.135	4,500,000
Guoco Holdings (Phils.)	0.15	0.16	0.15	0.155	8,870,000
Ionics Inc.	6.8	7.2	6.8	6.9	182,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	60,000
Macroasia Corp.	1	1	1	1	62,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.67	0.68	0.67	0.68	2,720,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.34	0.41	0.32	0.41	38,900,000
Music Corp.	0.46	0.53	0.46	0.52	42,270,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.39	0.42	0.38	0.42	10,620,000
Tanduay Holdings Inc.	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	20,000
Unioil Res. & Holdings Co.	0.05	0.06	0.05	0.06	500,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.13	0.145	0.13	0.14	3,050,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.33	0.34	0.33	0.34	50,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.29	0.3	0.27	0.28	2,030,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Active Alliance Inc.	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	10,000
Cen Azucar De La Carlota	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	27,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	200,000
Central Azucar Don Pedro	0.81	0.82	0.81	0.81	350,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	11.5	11.75	11.5	11.75	14,600
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICE					
Belle Corp.	0.42	0.45	0.41	0.45	1,490,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.45	0.46	0.45	0.46	1,020,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.4	0.4	0.38	0.38	250,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	170,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	26	26	25.5	26	1,420,000
Equitable Pci Bank-War	1.5	2.3	1.5	2.1	960,000
Globe Telecom Hldg (Pdr)	560	560	560	560	1,000
Jollibee Warrants	12	12	12	12	3,000
Omico Corp. Warrant	0.0014	0.0016	0.0014	0.0014	129,000,000
RFM Corp. - Pref.	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	39,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10	10	10	10	1,100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10	10	10	10	1,500
PLDT (10% Pref) Series X	10	10	10	10	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	10	10	10	10	1,000
Philweb.Com Inc. -Warrants	0.0065	0.0065	0.006	0.006	348,000,000
OTHERS					
Centro Escolar University	8.1	8.1	8.1	8.1	3,000
Far Eastern University	415	415	415	415	10
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	4.9	5	4.9	5	10,708,000
Cityland Development Corp.	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	2,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.21	0.22	0.21	0.21	3,360,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.34	0.36	0.33	0.35	6,490,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.245	0.26	0.245	0.25	9,230,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	5,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.68	1.72	1.64	1.68	6,807,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.245	0.245	0.18	0.18	50,000
SM Development Corp.	0.85	1	0.85	1	690,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6.4	6.4	6.3	6.3	3,098,000
Universal Rightfield Prop	0.07	0.095	0.07	0.09	2,400,000
Urbancorp Realty Dev. Inc.	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	50,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co., Inc. A	0.24	0.3	0.24	0.3	210,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.003	0.003	0.003	0.003	10,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	2.1	2.4	2.1	2.4	28,000
Itogon-Suyoc Mines A	0.025	0.025	0.023	0.023	42,400,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.145	0.15	0.145	0.15	2,470,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.145	0.155	0.145	0.155	5,360,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.003	0.003	0.0028	0.0028	18,000,000
Omico Corp.	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	80,000,000
Polar Mines & Dev't Corp.	0.018	0.018	0.018	0.018	4,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	100,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	100,000
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.11	0.13	0.11	0.13	200,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.018	0.018	0.018	0.018	5,000,000
Pacifica	0.016	0.016	0.015	0.015	9,000,000

	SHARES	VALUE (P)
Banks & Fin Svc	1,916,150	78,449,105.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	1,003,616,590	412,282,215.00
PRO	42,890,000	90,423,970.00
Mining	162,868,000	2,769,500.00
OIL	14,000,000	226,000.00
GRAND TOTALS :	1,225,290,740	584,150,790.00

AVERAGES		
Banks & Fin Svc	444.24	DOWN 1.85
Comm'l & Ind'l	1,574.34	UP 15.55
PRO	505.97	UP 5.97
Mining	1,012.30	UP 17.81
OIL	1.39	UNCH 0.00
All Shares Index	700.92	DOWN 7.14
Composite	1,128.47	UP 7.90

NO. OF ADVANCES: 60; NO. OF DECLINES: 33; NO. OF UNCHANGED: 23; NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 116; NO. OF TRADES: 4,837

CURRENCIES

Nov. 29, 2001

Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency In US$	Foreign currency In Peso
United States	Dollar	1.125999	1.000000	52.0240
Japan	Yen	0.009149	0.008125	0.4227
United Kingdom	Pound	1.605788	1.426100	74.1914
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.144393	0.128235	6.6713
Switzerland	Franc	0.683916	0.607386	31.5986
Canada	Dollar	0.710858	0.631313	32.8434
Singapore	Dollar	0.614965	0.546150	28.4129
Australia	Dollar	0.586764	0.521105	27.1100
Bahrain	Dinar	2.986894	2.652661	138.0020
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.300275	0.266674	13.8734
Brunei	Dollar	0.612622	0.544070	28.3047
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000108	0.000096	0.0050
Thailand	Baht	0.025556	0.022696	1.1807
UAE	Dirham	0.306645	0.272331	14.1677
Korea	Won	0.000892	0.000792	0.0412
Euro	Euro	1.000000	0.888100	46.2025
Germany	Mark	0.511292	0.454078	23.6230
France	Franc	0.152450	0.135390	7.0435
Netherlands	Guilder	0.453780	0.403002	20.9658
Austria	Schilling	0.072673	0.064541	3.3577
Belgium	Franc	0.024789	0.022015	1.1453
Italy	Lire	0.000517	0.000459	0.0239
Finland	Markka	0.168188	0.149368	7.7707
Portugal	Escudo	0.004988	0.00443	0.2305
Spain	Peseta	0.006011	0.005338	0.2777
Luxemburg	Franc	0.024789	0.022015	1.1453
Ireland	Punt	1.269738	1.127654	58.6651

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Partial List 11/29/2001

CLUBS	ASKED Price
ALABANG "A"	1,500,000
BAGUIO CC	740,000
CC AT TAGAYTAY	370,000
CAMP JOHN HAY	300,000
CAPITOL HILLS	120,000
CELEBRITY CLUB	200,000
FOREST HILLS "A"	230,000
MANILA POLO CLUB	2,800,000
MANILA SOUTHWOODS "A"	730,000
MANILA SOUTHWOODS "B"	800,000
ORCHARD "C"	550,000
RIVIERA GCC "A"/"B"	Call now
STA. ELENA "A"	1,700,000
TAGAYTAY MIDLANDS	750,000
WACK WACK GOLF	Call now

Share Swapping: Please Call

CLUBS	BID Price
ALABANG "A"	Call now
BAGUIO CC	700,000
CAMP JOHN HAY	Call now
CAPITOL HILLS	Call now
CC AT TAGAYTAY	Call now
MAKATI SPORTS "A"	Call now
MANILA GOLF (INDIV)	11,000,000
MANILA POLO	2,500,000
MANILA SOUTHWOODS "A"	Call now
MANILA SOUTHWOODS "B"	750,000
ORCHARD "A"	Call now
RIVIERA "A"	Call now
STA. ELENA "B"	Call now
WACK-WACK GOLF	Call now

AVAILABLE LESSORS FOR PLAYING RIGHTS

ALABANG CC "A"	25,000	RIVIERA "A"	5,000
CANLUBANG GC	35,000	STA. ELENA "A"	65,000
CC AT TAGAYTAY	20,000	TAGAYTAY MIDLANDS	35,000
MANILA GOLF	400,000	WACK WACK	90,000

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SEC License Broker #007575 * As of December 3, 2001

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CLUB	BUYER	SELLER
Alabang Country Club "A" (Filipino)	1,350,000	Please Call
Alabang Country Club "B" (Foreigner)	1,400,000	1,500,000
Baguio Country Club	725,000	800,000
Calatagan Golf Club "A"	70,000	100,000
Calatagan Golf Club "B"	-	100,000
Camp John Hay	-	300,000
Canlubang	-	800,000
Canyonwoods	Please Call	330,000
Capitol Hills	115,000	130,000
Cebu Country Club	-	2,000,000
Celebrity Sports Club	175,000	200,000
Eagle Ridge "A"/"B"/"C"	Please Call	Please Call
Eastridge "A"	Please Call	Please Call
Evercrest "A"	-	100,000
Forest Hills "A"	210,000	220,000
Forest Hills "B"	-	230,000
Forest Hills "C"	-	300,000
Makati Sports Club "A"	275,000	325,000
Makati Sports Club "B"	Please Call	375,000
Manila Golf (Corporate)	-	15,000,000
Manila Golf (Individual)	Please Call	13,500,000
Manila Polo	2,600,000	2,800,000
Manila Southwoods "A"	650,000	700,000
Manila Southwoods "B"	-	750,000
Metropolitan Club "B"	-	150,000
Montemar (Individual)	-	30,000
Mt. Malarayat	340,000	Please Call
Orchard Golf Club "A"	200,000	250,000
Orchard Golf Club "B"	-	300,000
Orchard Golf Club "C"	-	500,000
Philippine Columbian	-	80,000
Pueblo de Oro "A"/"B"/"C"	-	Please Call
Puerto Azul	-	125,000
Quezon City Sports Club	200,000	240,000
Riviera Golf & Country Club "A"	-	Please Call
Rockwell	-	550,000
Sherwood Hills "A"	-	150,000
Sta. Elena "A"	-	1,650,000
Sta. Elena "B"	-	2,200,000
Subic Bay Yacht (Corporate)	-	350,000
Subic Bay Yacht (Individual)	-	190,000
Tagaytay Country Club	-	360,000
Tagaytay Highlands	740,000	-
Tagaytay Midlands	-	720,000
The Country Club	Please Call	4,000,000
Valle Verde (Individual)	-	170,000
Valley Golf	220,000	240,000
Wack-Wack Golf Club	5,850,000	Please Call

PLAYING RIGHTS

(Available Lessors)

Alabang "A"	25,000	Mimosa Golf	25,000
Calatagan "A"	10,000	Orchard "A"	30,000
Canlubang	55,000	Riviera "A"	10,000
Eaglendge	15,000	Sta. Elena	60,000
Eastridge "A"	20,000	Tagaytay CC	20,000
Forest Hills	30,000	Tagaytay Golf	40,000
Manila Southwoods	40,000	Tagaytay Mid.	35,000
Makati Sports "A"	25,000	Valley Golf	20,000
Manila Golf	300,000	Wack-Wack	90,000

For more information, please call:
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Canyon Woods	200,000
Eagle Ridge "A"	350,000
Forest Hill "A"	230,000
Manila Golf (Indv.)	11,500,000
Manila Golf (Corp.)	13,000,000
Manila Polo	2,700,000
Manila Southwoods "B"	750,000
Makati Sports "A"	250,000
Mt. Malarayat "A"	350,000
Mt. Malarayat "C"	600,000
Orchard A/C	200,000/350,000
Sta. Elena "A"	1,550,000
Tagaytay Highland Club	340,000
Tagaytay Highland Golf	720,000
Tagaytay Midlands	650,000
Valle Verde CC "C"	320,000
Valley Golf	230,000
Wack Wack	5,875,000

SELLING	
Alabang A/B	1,400,000/1,450,000
Baguio Country Club	725,000
Camp John Hay Golf	220,000
Celebrity	Please call
Eagle Ridge "A"	380,000
Fontana A,B,C,D	Please call
Forest Hills "C"	350,000
Manila Golf (Indv.)	13,000,0000
Manila Golf (Corp.)	14,000,000
Manila Polo	2,800,000
Manila Southwoods "A"	645,000
Makati Sports A/B	300,000/300,000
Mimosa	150,000
Mt. Malarayat "A"	350,000
Quezon City Sports	220,000
Riviera "A"	190,000
Sta. Elena "A"	1,590,000
Tagaytay Highland Club	350,000
Tagaytay Highland Golf	750,000
Tagaytay Midlands	680,000
Valle Verde CC	175,000
Wack Wack	Please call

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AS OF NOVEMBER 29, 2001

		ASKED PRICE	BID PRICE
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2.	BAGUIO COUNTRY CLUB	750,000.00	650,000.00
3.	CALATAGAN GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "A"	-	80,000.00
4.	CALATAGAN GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "B"	Please call	80,000.00
5.	CANLUBANG GOLF CLUB	850,000.00	-
6.	CAMP JOHN HAY GOLF CLUB "A"	300,000.00	-
7.	CAPITOL HILLS GOLF CLUB	-	115,000.00
8.	CELEBRITY SPORTS CLUB	200,000.00	Please call
9.	COUNTRY CLUB AT TAGAYTAY	335,000.00	-
10.	CLUB FILIPINO	710,000.00	-
11.	EAGLERIDGE GOLF CLUB "B"	500,000.00	-
12.	EASTRIDGE GOLF CLUB	200,000.00	-
13.	FONTANA "C"	150,000.00	-
14.	MAKATI SPORTS CLUB "A"	250,000.00	-
15.	MAKATI SPORTS CLUB "B"	300,000.00	-
16.	MANILA POLO CLUB	Please call	2,600,000.00
17.	MANILA GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB (Individual)	Please call	-
18.	MANILA GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB (Corporate)	Please call	Please call
19.	MANILA SOUTHWOODS GOLF CLUB "A"	700,000.00	-
20.	MANILA SOUTHWOODS GOLF CLUB "B"	750,000.00	Please call
21.	METRO CLUB "A"	100,000.00	-
22.	MIMOSA C-2	350,000.00	-
23.	MONTEMAR BEACH CLUB	30,000.00	-
24.	MT. MALARAYAT "A"	350,000.00	-
25.	MT. MALARAYAT "C"	600,000.00	-
26.	ORCHARD GOLF CLUB "C"	350,000.00	-
27.	PUERTO AZUL BEACH CLUB	140,000.00	-
28.	PUNTA FUEGO (Individual)	843,000.00	-
29.	QUEZON CITY SPORTS CLUB	270,000.00	200,000.00
30.	ROCKWELL	550,000.00	-
31.	RIVIERA GOLF CLUB "B"	250,000.00	Please call
32.	STA. ELENA GOLF CLUB	1,750,000.00	-
33.	SUBIC YACHT CLUB	750,000.00 all in	-
34.	SPLENDIDO	650,000.00	-
35.	SHERWOOD HILLS "A"	130,000.00	80,000.00
36.	SHERWOOD HILLS "C"	-	250,000.00
37.	TAGAYTAY HIGHLANDS INTERNATIONAL GOLF CLUB	-	770,000.00
38.	TAGAYTAY MIDLANDS GOLF CLUB	-	650,000.00
39.	VALLE VERDE COUNTRY CLUB	175,000.00	-
40.	VERDEMAR GOLF CLUB, INC (CEBU)	Please call	-
41.	WACK WACK GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB	-	5,675,000.00
42.	THE COUNTRY CLUB	4,000,000.00	-
43.	OTHERS	Please call	-

PLAYING RIGHTS ALSO AVAILABLE

ALABANG COUNTRY CLUB	30,000.00
CANLUBANG GOLF CLUB	50,000.00
CALATAGAN GOLF CLUB	Free rental
COUNTRY CLUB AT TAGAYTAY	30,000.00
MAKATI SPORTS CLUB	20,000.00
MANILA SOUTHWOODS	35,000.00
STA. ELENA GOLF CLUB	65,000.00
TAGAYTAY GOLF CLUB	50,000.00
VALLEY GOLF CLUB	10,000.00
WACK WACK GOLF CLUB	75,000.00
ORCHARD GOLF CLUB	20,000.00
OTHERS	Please call

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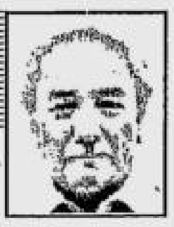
What? Another coco levy fund?

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES



Honesto C. General

FOR 10 long years up to 1982, a whopping P9.7 billion was fleeced out of the coconut farmers, big and small. This money has become to be known as the coco levy fund.

It started modestly and with the best of intentions. The original plan was to collect from the farmers only P100 million over 10 years. This amount was to be the capital of the Coconut Investment Company (later called the Coconut Industry Investment Fund). CIIF was to invest in oil mills and other coconut-based industries. Thus, the farmers were also to become capitalists. They would be earning, not only directly from the agricultural side, but also indirectly as shareholders in the manufacturing side, of the coconut industry.

Things did not work out as planned. Somewhere along the way the funds were hijacked. The farmers got little out of their hard-earned money except an overpriced life insurance, a few scholarships, some stock certificates on which no dividends have ever been declared, and seed nuts from an inferior coconut variety.

How was the money collected? Forget the law that started it all. Forget the subsequent presidential decrees and letters of instructions. These only give you a hint on how the coco levy program was implemented on the ground.

At the start, in accordance with the implementing rules, if a trader had an order from abroad for say, P100,000 worth of copra, he went to the Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) to get an export permit. For the sake of simplicity, if the levy at the time was 10 percent, he also had to buy P10,000 of coco fund receipts in various denominations. When he bought P1,000 worth of copra he paid the farmer P900 in cash and P100 in coco fund receipts.

Later, the coco fund receipt was scrapped. Instead, when the trader bought P1,000 worth of copra, he paid the farmer P900 in cash just the same. Then, the trader handed the farmer an invoice copy showing the P900 cash payment and the P100 deduction for the levy. In due time, the trader reported the transaction to PCA and paid the levy.

In both collection schemes, the farmer was supposed to register his coco fund receipts and invoice copies with the nearest Cocofed office. The Cocofed office then filed a report to PCA, which then issued the stock certificates. In due time, the farmer's coco fund receipts or invoice copies were replaced with CIIF stock certificates.

In effect, the levy was the farmer's advance full payment for shares of CIIF stock.

But most of the farmers, including my late brother Bio who was running our coconut farm in Naga City, either through ignorance or apathy or anger or all these three, did not bother to go to the Cocofed. It is estimated that only about 20 percent of the receipts and invoices were actually registered. As a result, PCA eventually found itself holding on to a huge sum of money as advance payments from farmers for shares of stock to CIIF. But PCA had few names to issue the shares of stock to.

The levy went up or down but was always pegged to 100 kilos of copra, regardless of the fluctuations of the buying price. The lower the price, the heavier was the farmer's burden. For example, from January to March 1974, when the price of copra was P443 per 100 kilos, the P55 levy was only 12 percent of buying price. But from May to November 1974, when the price dropped to P202 per 100 kilos, the levy, which had gone up to P100, accounted for a bone crushing 49.5 percent of the buying price.

Faced with mounting protests from the farmers, the coconut levy was mercifully stopped in 1982. After the 1986 People Power Revolution, the Commission on Audit was able to determine that, in 10 years that the levy was in effect, a whopping P9.7 billion had been fleeced from the coconut farmers.

There has never been, and never will be a full account of the coco levy fund. Most of the records have disappeared. But where some of the money went is known. That will be my story next week.

P17-B CYBER COMPLEX

NDC offers to handle fund raising for Pagcor project

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE DEBT-SADDLED National Development Corp. is jostling with government financial institutions to bag the lucrative contract to facilitate the financing package for Philippine Gaming and Management Corp.'s ambitious plan to build a P17-billion tourism and cyber complex on a reclaimed property along Roxas Boulevard.

Trade and Industry Secretary and NDC chair Manuel Roxas II said NDC was keen on undertaking the financing for the P17-billion project that could yield P170 million in fees for the state private investment arm.

Roxas said Pagcor was looking for a conduit to raise the money—either through bank borrowings, bond issuance or both—to bankroll its purchase of a 65-hectare reclaimed property along Roxas Boulevard.

Roxas said NDC would have no trouble raising the needed financing in behalf of Pagcor considering its hefty cash flow from the daily operations of its 13 casinos nationwide. Pagcor is expected to generate P16.5 billion in revenues this year, up 18 percent from P14 billion last year.

NDC was tapped by Malacañang in 1999 to issue up to P50 billion worth of Economic Recovery through Agricultural Productivity (Erap) bonds. Only P5 billion of these IOUs were issued.

"It's a back-to-back deal. Pagcor will carry all the risks and we, in turn, will get a one-percent commission or P170 million for doing practically nothing. We can use the money for small and medium enterprises," Roxas said.

He said the deal would have no negative impact on NDC which, based on past financial audit by SGV & Co., was P4 billion deep in the red largely due to a string of failed investments.

Roxas said that the project was envisioned to be a tourism haven and a hotbed for information technology firms and not a mere entertainment center offering the thrills of Las Vegas and the enchantment of Disneyland as previously reported.

Chinese firm offers to invest in Nonoc plant reopening

By Christine A. Gaylican

STATE-OWNED China Non-Ferrous Metals Corp. has offered to invest and participate in the reopening of a major nickel mine and processing plant in Surigao province.

The Chinese firm, which is also a major shareholder in Atlas Consolidated's Toledo copper mine in Cebu, has signified interest to take up an equity stake in the Nonoc refinery and Philnico Industrial Corp. mine in the province.

Mines and Geosciences Bureau director Horace Ramos said this meant China Non-Ferrous would have to infuse at least $110 million into the project.

The amount will form part of the $1-billion capital being raised to bring the Nonoc facilities back in operation.

Another foreign investor, South Africa's Impala Platinum Holdings earlier signed up to invest in and take up 25-percent equity in Nonoc.

Under the agreement with Impala, certain byproducts from Nonoc mine will be sent for further refining to Impala's Springs refinery in South Africa.

The Nonoc refinery complex used to be one Asia's biggest nickel mining and processing facilities in the 1970s. This was closed down in 1986 due to high oil prices, foreign exchange losses due to the peso's depreciation and the slump in nickel prices in the world market.

Philnico chair Evaristo Narvaez said in a report to the Bureau Mines and Geosciences that his company was on track of its schedule to reopen Nonoc mines by year 2004 and that it has been negotiating with prospective investors to secure the required financing.

Of the $1 billion needed to reopen the nickel mine and refinery, about half will be raised through equity infusion from current and prospective investors while the balance will be met through bank loans.

Narvaez said the company hoped to close all financing deals in the first quarter of next year.

Philnico Industrial is the parent company of Philnico Processing and Pacific Nickel Philippines Inc. The latter has a government concession to explore the 25,000-hectare Nonoc nickel mine.

Narvaez said his company has already completed a feasibility study on the project in Nonoc Island and acquired all the necessary government permits for its reopening.

Nonoc mine has a projected output of 40,000 metric tons of nickel a year. Nonoc plant will use the so-called acid leach technology.

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SM putting up ₱500-M mall in Cagayan de Oro

SM in an expansion binge

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—Despite security problems in some parts of Southern Philippines and the financial crisis that gripped the country, another SM branch rises in Mindanao. The mall, SM's second in Mindanao, will be built at the Pueblo de Oro Business Park here.

Workers have already started to weld the steel frames that would form part of the P500-million SM Mall here.

The Cagayan de Oro branch will become retail tycoon Henry Sy's second biggest investment in Mindanao's retail industry.

SM's first ever venture in the island is the P1-billion SM City Davao, which opened last Nov. 17.

Remedios Alejandrino, senior manager for corporate affairs of Pueblo de Oro Development Corp., said SM's branch here would be a three-story building. She said it would feature state-of-art entertainment facilities, including six cinemas and various shops.

Alejandrino said that SM has been keen on putting up a branch here as early as 1998, but plans did not push through because of the Asian financial crisis.

"The entry of SM in the city has a great impact on our economy. It is bound to generate jobs for the Kagay-anons. The SM Prime Holdings said it would prioritize Kagay-anon applicants in order to alleviate the unemployment problem here," Alejandrino said.

SM needs about 1,500 employees to man the operations of the mall, which is tentatively scheduled to open in December next year.

The Pueblo Business Park is about 5 km away from the Lumbia Airport and 5 km from the city proper. *Grace Cantal-Albasin, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Web-based services seen to boost PT&T earnings

By Abigail L. Ho

PHILIPPINE Telegraph and Telephone Co. is banking on its Internet-based services to boost its revenue base in the next several years.

PT&T president and chief executive Jose Luis Santiago said broadband technology and Internet-based services would be the company's key growth areas over a 10-year period.

"Over a 10-year horizon, Internet-based services will be a major source of PT&T's income. The traditional services will still be there, but the (Internet-based services) will provide a more aggressive push (to the company)," he said during PT&T's annual stockholders' meeting last week.

Santiago said the company was expected to generate P10.6 billion in revenues from its recently launched broadband connectivity service, SuperCom.

"The service was launched on Oct. 1 and we have so far met all the targets that we set," he said.

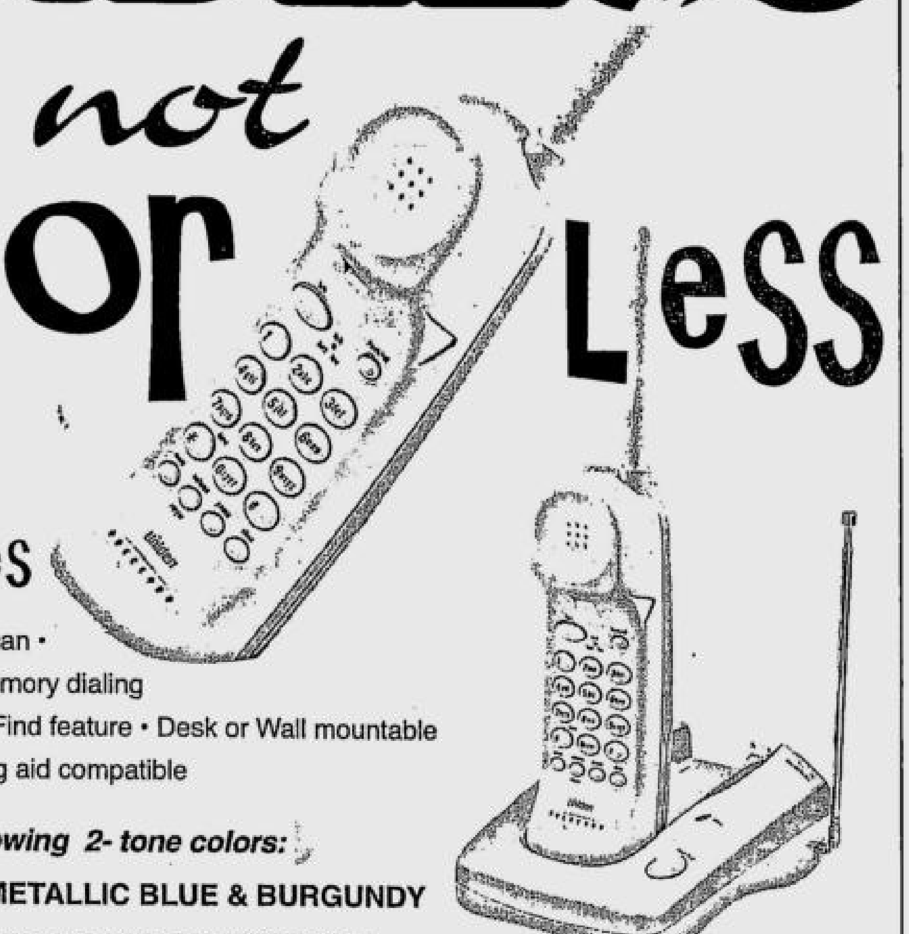
SuperCom includes a wide range of products and services that take advantage of high-speed broadband technology. These are videoconferencing, video on demand, voice over Internet protocol, network gaming, high-speed Internet and virtual private networks.

For the initial phase, Santiago said the company would roll out 3,500 lines nationwide for the fiscal year 2002 beginning July next year. This is expected to hit 42,000 lines by fiscal year 2011.

The projected funding requirement to achieve this rollout target was placed at P1.6 billion. Funding will come in the form of short term financing of P11 million for the first year, supplier financing over a 10-year period and internally generated funds.

Another service that is expected to contribute to PT&T's revenue stream is its Click & Call centers, a high-technology version of PT&T's traditional pubic calling offices.

CORDLESS but not COLORLESS



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An Ideal Gift this Christmas

Per DTI-NCR permit # 4104 series of 2001

Federal Chemicals, Inc.
Small Investors Program

A total of 10% of the Offer Shares or 1,250,800 shares shall be made available to Local Small Investors during an offer period from December 3, 2001 to December 7, 2001.

A local small investor is a share subscriber who is willing to subscribe to a minimum board lot or whose subscription does not exceed Twenty Thousand Pesos (Php20,000.00). Depending on market conditions, however, this 10% allocation for local small investors can be supplemented by subscriptions exceeding a minimum board lot of Twenty Thousand Pesos (Php20,000.00). In the event of an oversubscription for this 10% allocation or under any other circumstances, priority shall be given to the local small investors.

The offer to Local Small Investors shall take place as follows:

1. **Minimum Subscription.** Minimum of 1,000 shares.
2. **Subscription Forms.** An interested subscriber should cut out said Application Form/ Signature Card and photocopy the same to meet the four (4) copy requirement.

   Forms shall also be made available at selected RCBC Business Centers.
3. **Number of Forms.** Subscribers are not precluded from submitting more than one set of Application Forms for the purchase of additional board lots.
4. **Payment.** Forms should be filed at selected Business Centers on or before 12:30 noon of December 7, 2001. All applications should be supported by the following documents:
   - i. duly accomplished Application Form, in quadruplicate;
   - ii. duly accomplished Signature Card, in quadruplicate;
   - iii. photocopy of any of the following identification cards: SSS, GSIS, TIN, Passport; and
   - iv. manager's check in payment of the subscription.
5. **Rejection of Application.** The Business Centers shall have the authority to reject any Application Form filled up incorrectly or with incomplete supporting documents.
6. **Oversubscription.** In the event of oversubscription, priority shall be given to investors subscribing to the minimum board lot and any additional applications shall be disqualified. In the event of oversubscription where there are no multiple applications, the Lead Underwriter shall conduct a raffle to randomly determine the subscriptions to be accepted.

   If any application is rejected or accepted in part only, the application money or the appropriate portion of the same shall be returned without interest by way of a refund check made out in favor of the applicant and crossed "Payee's Account Only". The refund check shall be made available at the specific RCBC business center applied with until the end of the Offer Period and if not claimed within 30 days thereafter, the checks shall be mailed at the applicant's address as specified in his Application Form, at the applicant's risk.
7. **Stock Certificates.** As a matter of policy, the PSE requires the registration and lodging of a Company's securities for an IPO in the PCD. The PCD is a private institution which provides the depository and settlement system for securities, using the Book Entry System to record the ownership of shares. The BES allows the transfer of securities between accounts without the need for the issuance and transfer of stock certificates to the parties executing the trade or scripless trading.

   An Eligible Applicant shall have the choice of either: (i) lodging the shares with the PCD by electing a PCD participant (i.e., PSE member-brokers, custodian banks, institutional investors and other corporations or institutions that are active players in the Philippine equity market), provided that the Applicant is a *bonafide* client of the appointed PCD participant; or (ii) requesting for a stock certificate evidencing his ownership of such shares. The Eligible Applicant should indicate his choice in the Application to Subscribe.

   Should the Eligible Applicant fail to indicate his choice or provide incomplete or false information with regard to his choice as required hereinafter, this may lead to an automatic issuance of the stock certificate, subject to certain terms and conditions of the Offer, without prejudice to the Issue Managers' and Lead Underwriters' right to reject or scale-down such Application.

   The Offer Shares will be lodged with the PCD at least two (2) trading days prior to the Listing Date while the stock certificates will be issued and made available to Eligible Applicants who opted for certificates within three (3) trading days after the Listing Date.

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

December 3, 2001	Start of Offer
December 7, 2001	End of Offer to Local Small Investors
December 7, 2001	Raffle for Local Small Investors
December 7, 2001	Results of the Raffle
December 21, 2001	Listing

LIST OF RECEIVING CENTERS

RCBC Capital Corporation, 7th Floor, Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Avenue, Makati City

RIZAL COMMERCIAL BANKING CORPORATION (RCBC) BUSINESS CENTERS
METRO MANILA: Alabang, Binondo, Cubao, Kalookan, RCBC Plaza
LUZON: Baguio City, Naga City
VISMIN: Cebu City – Fuente Osmeña, Davao City

For more information, please contact RCBC Capital Corporation at Tel. No. 894-9000 ext. 2207/2212

FC
FEDERAL CHEMICALS, INC.
ELEVEN RD GRACE VILLAGE, BALINTAWAK, QUEZON CITY

APPLICATION TO SUBSCRIBE

Initial Public Offering of 12,508,000 New Common Shares
With Par Value of Php1.00 per share at Php7.00 per share

This application form together with the signature card, remittance of payment, and all application materials, must be received not later than December 7, 2001, 12:30 p.m., if filed with the Selling Agent, or not later than 10:00 a.m., December 10, 2001 (the "Offer Period Closing Date") if filed directly with an Underwriter for the Offer unless extended or terminated earlier with the approval of the Exchange at such time and date as of the Offer Shares are fully sold.

Applications received thereafter, or without the attachments specified below will be rejected. The application is irrevocable and, once received, may not be withdrawn by the applicant. The Company thru the Issue Manager reserves the right to accept or reject this Application. Applications improperly or incompletely accomplished may be rejected. In case of oversubscription, the Company thru the Issue Manager reserves the right to allocate the shares available to Applicants in a manner they deem appropriate.

APPLICATION

I/We apply to purchase Federal Chemicals, Inc. ("FCI" or the "Company") Shares under the terms and conditions stated herein and in the Prospectus for the Offer of such shares, as follows:

NUMBER OF SHARES	PRICE PER SHARE	TOTAL PURCHASE PRICE
	P7.00	

PAYMENT

The Offer Shares must be paid for in full upon submission of the Application. Payments should be made by check drawn against a Bangko Sentral Authorized bank in Metro Manila to the order of "Federal Chemicals, Inc. IPO". The check must be dated as of the date of the Application and crossed "PAYEE'S ACCOUNT ONLY".

TYPE OF CHECK ○ Personal ○ Corporate ○ Manager's/Cashiers

BANK/BRANCH	CHECK NO.	AMOUNT

WARRANTY

I/WE REPRESENT AND WARRANT THAT ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED HEREIN AND THE ATTACHED DOCUMENTS ARE TRUE AND CORRECT. I/WE WARRANT HAVING READ AND UNDERSTOOD AND RELIED SOLELY UPON THE PROVISIONS OF THE PROSPECTUS AND THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS STATED WITHIN THIS APPLICATION AND UNCONDITIONALLY ACCEPTED SAID TERMS AND CONDITIONS. I/WE UNDERSTAND THAT NO PERSON HAS BEEN AUTHORIZED TO GIVE INFORMATION OR TO MAKE ANY REPRESENTATION WITH RESPECT TO THE OFFER SHARES OTHER THAN THOSE SPECIFIED IN THE PROSPECTUS.

NAME OF APPLICANT IN PRINT	SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT		DATE
ADDRESS	TELEPHONE NO.	TAX IDENTIFICATION NO.	
	NATIONALITY		

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

(Applicants should not fill up this section)

To be completed by the Underwriting/Selling Agent
Application received with all the documents required below by
(Name of Underwriter/Trading Participant)
By
Date

To be completed by the Receiving Bank
Application received by
Total No. of Shares
By
Date

REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS TO THIS APPLICATION

1. Corresponding check payments
2. One fully executed signature card in the form attached to this Application
3. If the Applicant is a Corporation, Partnership, Trust Account, fund or entity, this Application must be accompanied by the following documents:
   - (i) [illegible]
   - (ii) [illegible]

FC

☐ Individual
☐ Corporate

Specimen Signature Card

Name ______________________
(Surname) (First Name) (Middle Name)

Mailing Address ______________________

T.I.N. | Tel. No. | Citizenship

Specimen Signatures for Individuals: *(Please sign twice)*

1.) ____________ 1.) ____________
2.) ____________ 2.) ____________

For Corporate Applicants: Use Reverse Side for Specimen Signature

Important: Certificates will not be transferred unless a specimen signature of the stockholder is on file with the transfer agent of the Company. For your protection, please fill out this card and return it with your Application.

Signature Verified by;
(Signature Over Printed Name)
Date ____________

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THE OFFER

1. **THE OFFER SHARES** - The Company is offering for subscription to the public, a total of Twelve Million Five Hundred Eight Thousand (12,508,000) New Common Shares, each with a par value of One Peso (Php1.00) per share which are being made available for subscription in the Philippines. The Offer Shares will represent approximately 33.35% of the issued and outstanding common shares of the Company after completion of the Offer.
2. **OFFER PRICE** - The Offer Shares shall be offered at a price of Php7.00 per share.
3. **OFFER PERIOD** - The Offer Period for local small investors and Trading Participants shall commence at 9:00 a.m. of December 3, 2001 and shall expire at 12:30 p.m. of December 7, 2001. With respect to the Offering to the general public, the Offer Period shall start at 9:00 a.m. of December 3, 2001 and shall end at 10:00 a.m. of December 10, 2001. The Company and Issue Manager and Lead Underwriter reserves the right to extend or terminate the Offer Period at anytime, subject to the approval of the PSE.
4. **ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS** - The Offer Shares may be purchased by any person who is at least eighteen (18) years old or a corporation, partnership or trust account subject to restrictions on the ownership, sale or transfer of the Offer Shares.
5. **MINIMUM SUBSCRIPTION** - Eligible Applicants shall have the right to subscribe to a minimum of one thousand (1,000) shares, and thereafter, in multiples of one thousand (1,000) shares. No Application of multiples of any other number of shares shall be considered.
6. **PAYMENT TERMS** - Eligible Applicants subscribing to the Offer Shares are required to pay the full amount of the Offer Shares applied for upon submission of their duly accomplished Application to Subscribe to the Underwriters or a designated Trading Participant. In case there are any Offer Shares that are not taken up by the Eligible Applicants, the Underwriters shall subscribe, or shall cause their clients to subscribe, to all unsold Offer Shares in accordance with their firm commitment to underwrite the same and shall remit the full payment of their subscription and/or that of their clients to the Issue Manager and Lead Underwriter not later than 10:00 a.m. of December 11, 2001 or on such date as may be agreed upon in writing by the Issuer and the Issue Managers and Lead Underwriters.

   Payments for the subscription and purchase of the Offer Shares shall be made by check drawn against a BSP authorized agent bank in Metro Manila and made payable to the order of "Federal Chemicals, Inc. IPO" crossed "Payee's Account Only".
7. **APPLICATION TO SUBSCRIBE** - Eligible Applicants may subscribe to and purchase the Offer Shares by submitting a duly completed Application to Subscribe (defined to include one (1) fully executed signature card, accompanying payment and other documentary requirements as may be indicated below, if applicable), which must be received by the Issue Manager and Lead Underwriter on or before 10:00 a.m. of December 10, 2001 or on such later date as may be agreed upon in writing by the Issuer and the Issue Manager and Lead Underwriter. In case any Offer Shares are not taken up by the Eligible Applicants, the Underwriters and/or their clients shall submit their respective duly completed Application to Subscribe to the Issue Manager and Lead Underwriter not later than 10:00 a.m. of December 11, 2001 or on such later date as may be agreed upon in writing by the Issuer and the Issue Manager and Lead Underwriter.
8. **SMALL INVESTOR PROGRAM** - In compliance with SEC-BED Circular No. 4, Series of 1997, ten percent (10%) of the entire IPO shall be offered to "local small investors". A local small investor is a share subscriber who is willing to subscribe to a minimum board lot or whose subscription does not exceed Twenty Thousand Pesos (Php20,000.00). Depending on market conditions, however, this 10% allocation for local small investors can be supplemented by subscriptions exceeding a minimum board lot of Twenty Thousand Pesos (Php20,000.00). In the event of an oversubscription for this 10% allocation or under any other circumstances, priority shall be given to the local small investors.
9. **REQUIREMENTS FOR CORPORATE APPLICANTS** - Applicants who are corporations whether foreign or local, partnerships or trusts eligible to subscribe to and purchase the Offer Shares are required to submit the following documents, in quadruplicate, together with the Application to Subscribe and duly executed signature card: (i) Copy of the Applicant's SEC Certificate of Registration, Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws, or other constitutive documents as amended (if applicable) and (ii) Certificate of the Corporate Secretary of the Applicant attesting to the Resolution of the Applicant's Board of Directors which (1) authorizes the subscription and/or purchase of the Offer Shares applied for and specifying the signatories for the purpose, and (2) includes specimen signatures of the designated authorized signatures.
10. **REQUIREMENTS FOR NON-RESIDENT INDIVIDUAL OR FOREIGN CORPORATE AND INSTITUTIONAL APPLICANTS** - In addition to the documents required for either Individual or Corporate Applicants above, non-resident individuals or foreign corporate and institutional Applicants are required to submit in quadruplicate, together with their Application to Purchase, a representation and warranty stating that their investing in the Offer Shares being applied for will not violate the rules of their jurisdiction and that they are allowed to acquire or invest in the Offer Shares.
11. **RIGHT TO ACCEPT/REJECT/SCALE DOWN APPLICATIONS** - As authorized by the Issuer, the Issue Manager and Lead Underwriter reserve the right to jointly reject, scale down or reallocate any Application for the Offer Shares. Applications to Subscribe in respect of which checks are dishonored upon presentment or Applications to Subscribe which do not comply with the terms of the Offer, and which are deficient in any material information required therein, shall be rejected. In the event of an oversubscription of the Offer Shares, the Issue Manager and Lead Underwriter, as authorized by the Issuer, shall likewise have the right to scale down any Offer Shares applied for. An Application to Subscribe, once accepted, shall constitute the Subscription Agreement between the Applicant and the Issuer for the Offer Shares. In case of reduction or rejection, the Underwriter shall inform the Applicant in writing of such reduction or rejection within ten (10) Banking Days after the end of the Offer Period.
12. **REFUNDS** - Refunds, in whole or in part, of payments for any Application not accepted or scaled down shall made without interest. Each refund check shall be made available for pick up at the Head Office of the Issuer or the Issue Manager and Lead Underwriter within ten (10) Banking Days after the close of the Offer. Refund checks which remain unclaimed after thirty (30) Banking Days from Issue Date shall then be mailed at the risk of the Applicant to the address specified by the Applicant in its/his Application to Subscribe.
13. **DELIVERY OF STOCK CERTIFICATES** - As a matter of policy, the PSE requires the registration and lodging of a company's securities for an IPO in the PCD. The PCD is a private institution which provides the depository and settlement system for securities, using the Book Entry System to record the ownership of shares. The BES allows the transfer of securities between accounts without the need for the issuance and transfer of stock certificates to the parties executing the trade or scripless trading.

    An Eligible Applicant shall have the choice of either (i) lodging the shares with the PCD by electing a PCD participant (i.e. PSE Trading participants, custodian banks, institutional investors and other corporations or institutions that are active players in the Philippine equity market), provided that the Applicant is a bonafide client of the appointed PCD participant, or (ii) requesting for a stock certificate evidencing his ownership of such shares. The Eligible Applicant should indicate his choice in the Application to Subscribe.

    Should the Eligible Applicant fail to indicate his choice or provide incomplete or false information with regard to his choice as required hereinafter, this may lead to an automatic issuance of the stock certificate, subject to certain terms and conditions of the Offer, without prejudice to the Issue Manager and Lead Underwriter's right to reject or scale-down such Application.

    The Offer Shares will be lodged with the PCD at least two (2) trading days prior to the Listing Date while the stock certificates will be issued and made available to Eligible Applicants who opted for certificates within three (3) trading days after the Listing Date.
14. **TAXES** - All documentary stamp taxes applicable to the original issuance of the Offer Shares and all taxes relating to the Offer shall be for the account of the Issuer.
15. **REGISTRATION OF FOREIGN INVESTMENT** - The Issuer does not undertake to register any foreign investment with respect to the Offer Shares with the BSP. It shall be the obligation of the foreign investor to secure the necessary clearances and/or approvals from the BSP regarding repatriation of the investments in the Offer Shares and remittance of dividends.
16. **LISTING** - An application for listing of the Offer Shares on the Second Board has been filed with the PSE. Acceptance of all Applications to Subscribe the Offer Shares is conditional upon the listing of the Offer Shares with the PSE. It is expected that the Offer Shares shall be listed with the PSE on December 21, 2001 and trading of the Offer Shares is expected to commence on the same date. In the event that the Common Shares are not listed with the Exchange for any reason, the Company shall return the payments made by the Applicants for the Offer Shares under their respective Applications to Subscribe without interest.
17. **STOCK TRANSFER AGENT** - RCBC Trust and Investment Division shall act as the Stock Transfer Agent for the purpose of authenticating and registering transfer of the Offer Shares as set forth in the Stock Transfer Agreement.
18. **RESTRICTION ON ISSUANCE AND DISPOSAL OF SHARES** - In compliance with the PSE Listing Rules applicable to companies applying to list on the Second Board, all existing shareholders at the time of filing of the application for listing shall enter into an agreement with the Exchange not to sell, assign, or in any manner, dispose of all their shares after the close of its initial public offering and for the duration of two (2) years following the listing of said shares. In addition, the Company shall not issue additional shares within one hundred eighty (180) days from Listing Date.

THE APPLICANT IS ADVISED TO READ THE OFFERING PROSPECTUS FOR A COMPLETE DESCRIPTION OF THE SHARES AND THE TERMS UNDER WHICH THEY ARE OFFERED.

Dear Applicant,

Please indicate if you want to receive stock certificate(s) for your subscription to shares of stock of Federal Chemicals, Inc. (FCI) by signing on the space provided for below.

Stock certificate(s) will be delivered to the Selling Agent and/or Underwriter to whom you submitted your application to subscribe within three (3) days after Listing Date of the FCI shares in the Philippine Stock Exchange. Stock certificate(s) unclaimed after sixty (60) days will be mailed, at the Applicant's risk, to the address indicated in the Application To Subscribe.

Thank you.

FEDERAL CHEMICALS, INC.

This will confirm that the undersigned Applicant wishes to receive stock certificate(s) for his subscription to shares of stock of Federal Chemicals, Inc. This will authorized Federal Chemicals, Inc. and/or the Issue Manager and Lead Underwriter, RCBC Capital Corporation, and/or the transfer agent, Rizal Commercial Banking Corporation (RCBC) – Trust and Investment Division, to take any and all steps to cause the issuance of the stock certificate(s) in my name. This will also serve as a request to the Philippine Central Depository, Inc. (PCDI) to cause the upliftment of shares of Federal Chemicals, Inc. registered in the name of the undersigned for eventual issuance of stock certificate(s).

Thank you.

Name and Signature of Applicant

Date:

Cut in banks' loan loss provision seen

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas is planning to cut the general loan loss provision requirement on banks by half a percent to one percent to free up more funds and encourage banks to lend more aggressively.

BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura explained that if the policy-making Monetary Board would approve the plan, the cut would be implemented prospectively and would not apply on funds that were already tied up to existing loans.

The BSP has yet to come up with its final recommendation but the bias is in favor of cutting the loan loss provision that is currently at 2 percent.

"We want to cut the (loan loss) provision by half to encourage new loans. We think the economy has bottomed out and we already know more or less the extent of the non-performing loans of the banks," said Buenaventura.

He said a one-percent general provision on loans would be at par with international banking standards.

As of the third quarter, the total loans extended by the commercial banking sector declined by 1.8 percent to P1.256 trillion from P1.28 trillion in the previous quarter and by 1.7 percent from P1.278 trillion a year ago.

Of the total loans, banks have to set aside more than P25 billion for the general loan loss provision.

The general loan loss provision of 2 percent, according to Buenaventura, was implemented by the central bank during the Asian crisis to bolster the banks' reserves.

The policy although deemed restrictive by certain quarters had already served its purpose, said the central bank chief. He added that the intention of the BSP now was to focus the loan loss provisions on loan components that have remained problematic.

"The regulation has run its cycle already. We now want the banks to lend more aggressively, particularly to credit-worthy companies," said the central bank chief.

Buenaventura, however, said the easing of the general provision might not necessarily translate to an increase in bank credit. The central bank had already given up on a projected 10-percent growth in lending this year.

As of September, loans extended by the banking sector had contracted by 0.6 percent compared with its level a year ago.

Digitel defers soft launch of mobile phone service

By Abigail L. Ho

GOKONGWEI-OWNED Digital Telecommunications Phil. Inc. has postponed the scheduled soft launch of its cellular phone service. The company, however, stressed it would still meet the scheduled start of its mobile phone business' operations.

Digitel senior vice president for legal and intercarrier services William Pamintuan said in an interview last week that the company's system was not yet complete.

"We're continuing our rollout, but the system is not yet complete. (It would be better) if we have more systems installed before the soft launch," he said.

The soft launch was supposed to take place this December, but Pamintuan said this would be moved to early next year.

Despite the delay in the soft launch, he said that commercial operations of Digitel's wireless business would start as scheduled in the first quarter of next year.

"The switch is here and we have already installed some cell sites. We're also talking to some content providers for our value-added services," he said.

National Telecommunications Commission chief Eliseo Rio Jr. said in an earlier interview that Digitel has yet to submit any changes to its business plan regarding the start of its commercial operations.

He added, however, that the newest player in the cellular service arena should roll out its services within 18 months from the time it was granted a provisional authority.

Digitel got its PA to operate a cellular phone business in August last year. The 18-month provision in their PA will expire in February.

Pamintuan added that Digitel was still working out interconnection deals with dominant carriers Smart Communications Inc. and Globe Telecom Inc.

"It's moving but I hope it's moving faster. Interconnection issues should be ironed out before the launch," he said.

He added that the 90-day period given by the NTC for the carriers to interconnect already lapsed last October.

Technically, the NTC can already step in and force the carriers to interconnect their systems, but Pamintuan said his company would still try to settle their differences without intervention from the regulatory body.

Initially, Digitel's cellular network will have a capacity to accommodate 500,000 subscribers, but this can easily be expanded in the future.

Pamintuan said Digitel aimed to get 300,000 subscribers in the first year of its operation. This number would be a mix of postpaid and prepaid subscribers, with the prepaid subscribers to form the majority.

He assured potential subscribers that Digitel's rates would be "very reasonable. It's really all about value for money."

Meanwhile, Pamintuan disclosed that Digitel was already in talks with a potential foreign strategic partner that could help it survive in the fiercely competitive cellular service arena.

"We're talking to one, but I can't name the company because of our non-disclosure agreement with them. All I can say is that it's not our existing investor," he said.

JG Summit Holdings Inc. of the Gokongwei family holds a 47.4-percent stake in the telecommunications firm, while Swedish company Telia AB owns a 9.4-percent stake.

GOINGS-ON

LBP bags BTr awards

LAND Bank of the Philippines recently won the Bureau of Treasury's Most Outstanding Underwriter and Selling Agent award for the four-year Retail Treasury Bonds (RTBs) and the Best Performing Government Securities Eligible Dealer for the primary market.

Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho and National Treasurer Sergio Edeza conferred the awards to LBP president and CEO Gary Teves during the Bureau of Treasury's 104th anniversary celebration.

The bank bagged the first award for the initial tranche of the four-year RTBs, besting other underwriters such as BPI Capital, DBP, PCI Capital, BOD Capital and First Metro Investment Corp.

As lead underwriter and issue manager, LBP sold a total of P7.9 billion for the two tranches. Of the amount, P7.1 billion was sold by the corporate finance department to institutional investors, while P730 million were sold through the bank's network of online branches.

Promoting cooperatives

THE COOPERATIVE Development Authority under the Office of the President has called on its regional offices to embark on new modes of promoting cooperatives as a viable and vital vehicle for economic developments.

CDA administrator Virginia Teodosio cited the 2001 survey done by the United Nations International Labor Organization wherein 95 nations, including the Philippines, recognized the importance of cooperatives in upgrading the socioeconomic status of developing countries.

Teodosio said the 89th session of the ILO, which deliberated on the survey results, called for the creation of support services for cooperatives which can be in the form of education and training, informational activities, provision for financial incentives and legal privileges.

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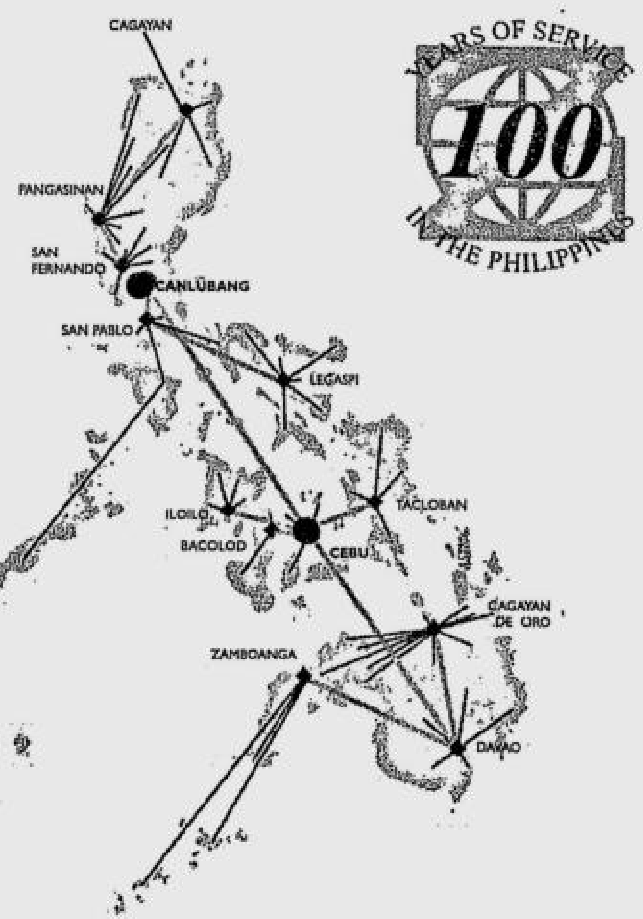

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Ford accord deals big blow to local group

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE GOVERNMENT'S endorsement of Ford Motor Co.'s product-sharing agreement between Ford's Philippine and Thai subsidiaries is seen as the biggest blow to Francisco Motors Corp.'s bid to get compensation from the US automaker and sister firm Mazda Corp. of Japan.

Francisco Motors has accused Ford and Mazda of running down its exclusive contract to assemble and market Mazda pickups in the Philippines.

A Francisco Motors official complained that the approval of Ford's Asean Industrial Cooperation agreement would choke off Francisco Motors' pending appeal with the Board of Investments to get $66 million in compensation from Ford and Mazda.

The Aico agreement allows Ford to bring in Ford Ranger pickups from Thailand in exchange for Ford Laser sedans and Escape sport-utility vehicles from the Philippines. The deal is expected to generate some $1.2 billion in trade.

The Francisco Motors official said the BOI should have decided first on his company's case before giving the green light to the project because Francisco Motors would lose its leverage in getting compensation for Ford's and Mazda's alleged transgressions.

Francisco Motors had been assembling Mazda pickups since the early '80s up to two years ago, when Mazda abruptly halted its delivery of new model units to Francisco Motors and Ford introduced the Ranger.

Except for the badge and trimmings, the Ranger is essentially the same vehicle as Mazda's B-series pickup. Both vehicles share the same platform.

Francisco Motors has an agreement with Mazda to assemble the B-series pickups until October 2002. Ford will take over the Mazda and Ford brands here but only after Mazda, Francisco Motors and Columbian Autocars Corp., assembler of Mazda sedans, have set up a joint venture to allow them to continue marketing Mazda models locally.

Columbian's Jose Ch. Alvarez was able to pocket a handsome settlement from Mazda in exchange for his consent to let Ford market the Laser, which shared the same platform as Columbian's Mazda Familia, in the Philippines.

While this should have bolstered Francisco Motors's case, the BOI chose to ignore this tacit agreement of the similarity between the Ford and Mazda models and allowed Ford to sell the Ranger unimpeded.

Credit watchers form group to raise standards

By Elena R. Torrijos

FIVE of the country's seven credit reporting companies have bonded together to form the Philippine Credit Reporting Alliance Inc., an organization designed to improve industry standards and promote quality credit reports.

PHILCReA members include CIBI Information Inc., Equifacts Information Inc., Asian Credit Consultant & Business Services, First Asia Corporate Business Connection and Excellent Credit Information Inc., all of which keep data on the credit history of companies and individuals and provide the information to clients, mainly banks and rating agencies.

CIBI Information president and chief executive Cayetano Paderanga Jr. said the alliance would attempt to standardize and define industry practices such as what should be involved in an ocular inspection, what steps should have been taken for a credit report to be acceptable.

Paderanga also said the five companies had adopted a code of business conduct and ethics to guide them in carrying out their duties and responsibilities to the public and government and in regard to relationships among themselves.

The code provides, among others, that the companies shall observe utmost confidentiality in the conduct of information-gathering such that the name of the inquirer and the source or sources of information also the manner by which data are obtained would not be divulged.

Also, all possible means and efforts shall be exhausted before preparing a report and only factual, unbiased and reliable reports shall be released to the client, allowing no employee or person under our authority to prepare, communicate or release a duly recognized misleading or fraudulent report.

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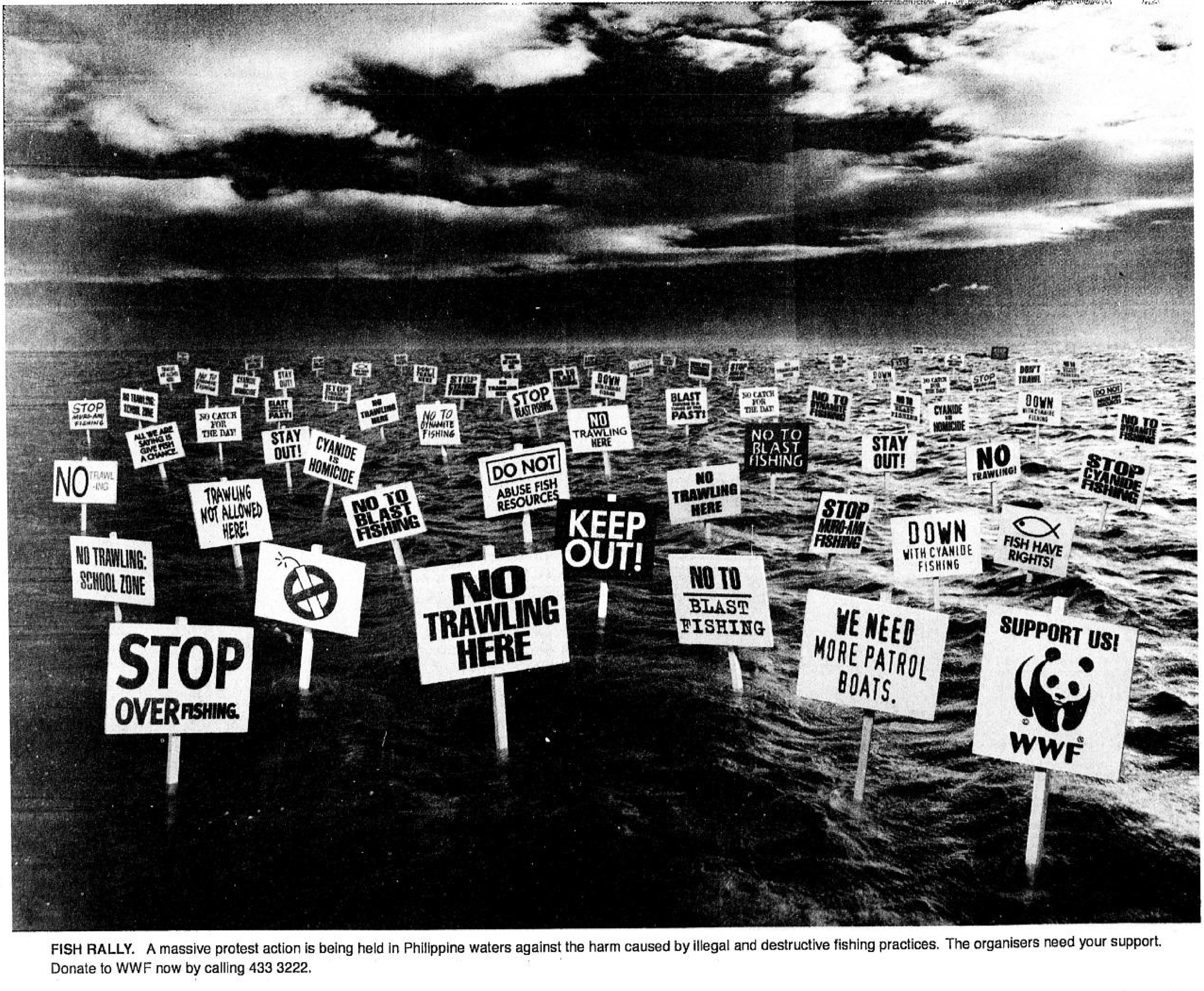
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WORST YEAR EVER

Hong Kong already feeling recession pinch

HONG KONG—The government said Friday that Hong Kong is barely managing to avoid falling into a recession, although many ordinary people say they already are suffering from the economic downturn.

"This is the worst year I've ever experienced," said 74-year-old Wong Sing, who has watched in dismay as sales plunged at his tiny, open-air banana stall. "The economy is really bad; very few people come to buy my bananas these days."

Wong was far from alone in his worries, although economic numbers released after the stock market closed Friday indicate Hong Kong's economy might not be as bad as many believe.

Gross domestic product shrank by 0.3 percent in the third quarter compared with the year-ago period, following a rise of 0.8 percent in the second quarter, the government said.

But when the statistics are compared going quarter to quarter, GDP rose by 0.4 percent in the three-month period just ended following a drop of 1.4 percent in the second quarter.

Many private forecasters say such figures may be a bit misleading and government economist KY Tang acknowledges, "You could say Hong Kong is going into recession territory."

"I think Hong Kong is in a recession because you look at the retail sales year-on-year, it's down," said Andy Xie, chief economist at Morgan Stanley Asia Ltd. "The export is down, and the property market is weak. It's difficult to see how the economy is rising."

ING Barings economist Craig Chan acknowledged Friday's figures were "much better than expected" but still nothing to cheer about.

"Since we're not falling into a technical recession, I think next quarter we will," Chan said.

It seems unlikely that Hong Kong stands much of a chance of bouncing back before the United States can resume economic growth—the world's largest economy is itself in the throes of a recession—and it's hard to say when that might happen in the midst of the terrorism crisis.

Hong Kong's political leader, chief executive Tung Chee-hwa, recently warned the economy could shrink "for a few quarters."

"We've been having a deep recession," said 65-year-old Frank Fung, a retired accountant.

Like many in the former British colony, Fung believes Hong Kong never fully recovered from its 1998 recession, which was caused by the Asian economic crisis. This time, the fallout from the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks in America and ongoing conflict in Afghanistan are stifling hopes of a quick recovery.

The key travel and export sectors are getting hammered, and unemployment is on the rise, with joblessness standing at 5.5 percent for the three months ending Oct. 31, an uncomfortably high figure for this formerly bustling financial hub. *AP*

Malaysia joblessness worsens on US attacks

KUALA LUMPUR—The worsening world economy and the Sept. 11 terror attacks on the US have caused tens of thousands of workers to lose their jobs in Malaysia, Deputy Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said Saturday.

Abdullah in an interview with Bernama news agency said 34,502 workers have lost their jobs in the year to Nov. 17.

Of these 29,900 workers, or 86.7 percent were Malaysians while the rest were foreigners, he said. Last year's unemployment data were not available.

"We hope employers will retrench foreign workers first. But if we study the matter, we see other aspects. Maybe Malaysians do not want to take up the jobs left by foreign workers," Abdullah said.

Foreign workers are mainly found in the services and plantation sectors, whose poor wages and tough working conditions are often shunned by Malaysians.

Abdullah said the job losses could be explained by a fall in demand for products, which had led to the shutting down or relocation of factories.

Labor Department statistics obtained by Bernama show three-quarters of the jobs were lost in manufacturing with trade and finance showing the next biggest losses.

Most of the losses were in Penang, Johor and Selangor, where Malaysia's export-dependent information technology industries are based, Bernama said.

The central bank last week announced an economic contraction of 1.3 percent in the third quarter, the first year-on-year drop since the first quarter of 1999, amid sharp falls in manufacturing output.

Malaysia last plunged into recession in 1998 amid the Asian financial crisis, but it rebounded the following year and recorded a heady 8.5 percent growth last year.

The government has cut its growth forecast for this year for a second time to between one to 2 percent, and has imposed a range of fiscal measures to boost consumer spending. *AFP*

Enron's employees awaiting bankruptcy

HOUSTON—Former energy trading giant Enron Corp. continued to play a waiting game Friday, refraining from public comment even as the market readied for what could be the largest corporate bankruptcy filing in history.

Enron's 20,000-plus employees worldwide, including more than 6,000 in Houston, were also awaiting word on whether they would still have jobs next week; Enron laid off 1,100 in Britain on Friday.

Some in Houston had already cleaned out their desks, anticipating layoffs after getting paid on Friday. They also reflected on a whirlwind downfall that gripped the once-heralded company two days after its would-be savior, Dynegy Inc., walked away from an $8.4-billion bailout.

"We kind of went out with a bang," Enron employee Nathan Will said. "It wasn't like we sat around for six months bleeding. It's a Wild West scenario that masks a lot of disappointment."

The bleeding continued Friday on the New York Stock Exchange, where shares trickled down another 10 cents, or 28 percent, to 26 cents in heavy trading. Last December, shares were trading near $85 per share.

Enron declined to return repeated calls Friday.

"Everyone is sitting around and waiting to see what (Enron chair and chief executive) Ken Lay is going to do," said Prudential Securities analyst Carol Coale. "As far as we're concerned, they don't have a lot of alternatives. They have good assets with the pipelines, but as we've said in print, those assets are pledged against banks."

According to BankruptcyData.com, Texaco Inc. filed the largest bankruptcy in history in 1987 when it had $35.9 billion in assets. Adjusted for inflation, that amount would be about $56.4 billion today, the Boston-based company said.

As of Sept. 30, Enron had $62.8 billion in assets, though that figure might be substantially less, given developments over past several weeks.

Robert Christmas, a bankruptcy expert with Nixon Peabody LLC in New York, said Texaco sought bankruptcy protection to escape an $11-billion court judgment. He said Enron needed Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection to keep creditors seeking up to $27 billion in debt at bay while the company tried to remain in business, albeit smaller and humbled.

But Enron also needs cash and credit to maintain its trading operation, both of which are scarce.

"What do you do if no one trusts your credit?" Christmas asked. "No terrorist blew up Enron. It was management."

Several energy companies have stopped making trades with Enron while getting ready to take a charge against profits for potential exposure for contracts that aren't completed. Typical was a statement from Naperville, Illinois-based Nicor, which said its financial exposure to Enron was less than $5 million.

Enron's loss of credibility in the market stemmed from revelations that its chief financial officer ran partnerships that allowed the company to keep half a billion dollars in debt off its books. In early November, Enron restated its earnings back to 1997, eliminating more than $580 million in reported income in that time span.

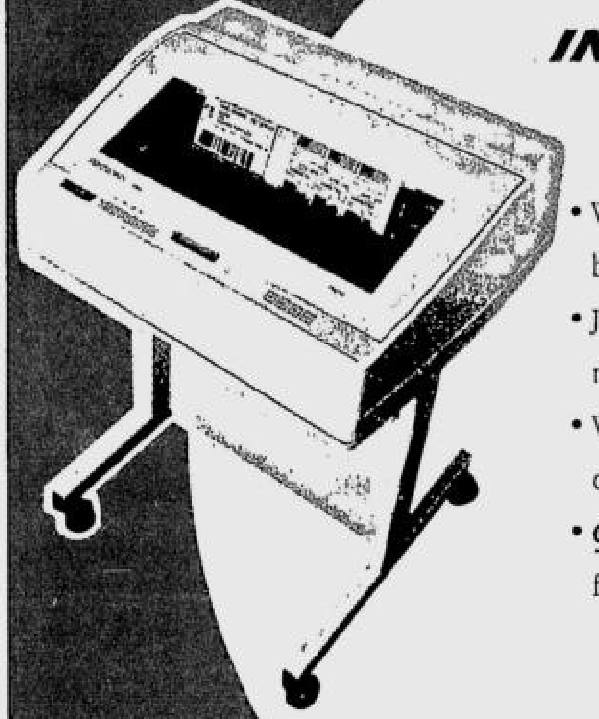
Houston-based Dynegy swooped in to rescue its neighbor with an $8.4-billion buyout, but even top officials at the smaller rival were surprised when Enron later disclosed it had a $690-million debt within a week.

Amid negotiations to reduce the purchase price, the Dynegy-Enron deal fell apart after Enron's credit was reduced to junk status.

Congressional leaders are calling for hearings into the Enron fallout, the Securities and Exchange Commission is investigating, and both investors and employees have filed several lawsuits.

The picture is starkly different from a year ago, when former Enron chief executive Jeff Skilling touted the company as the wave of the energy future.

Enron had developed trading mechanisms used to control price fluctuations in natural gas and applied them to electricity, bandwidth, metals and other commodities. Executives said major oil companies were dinosaurs because they handled production and marketing, while Enron left production to others and made most of its profits buying and selling. *AP*



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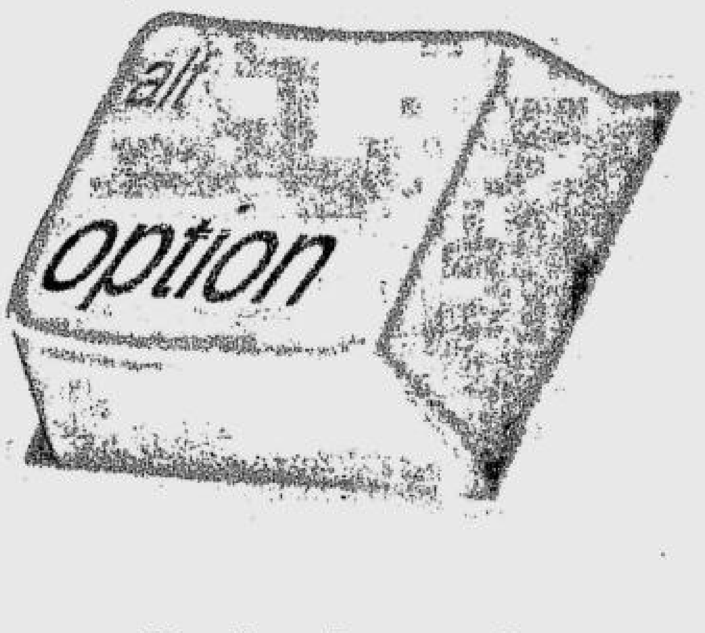

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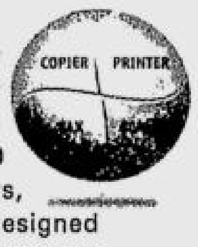

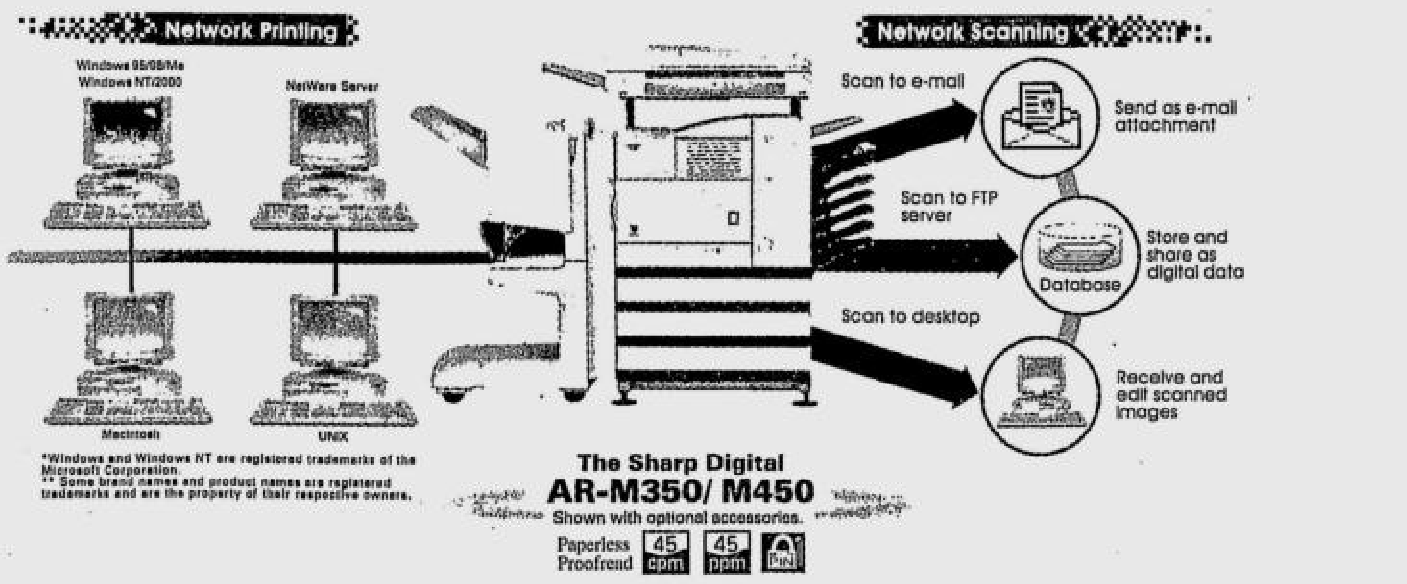

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LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late Edna Amog Malan was extrajudicially settled to Felicitas F. Amog per doc #310 Page 29 Book II Series of 2001 Before Notary Public Consuelo A. Bocar of Zambales.
PDI--Nov. 26,Dec.3&10,2001

PHILIPPINE DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION

NOTICE TO DEPOSITORS OF THE CLOSED RURAL BANK OF SAN NARCISO (Quezon), INC. (RBSNI)

1. The PDIC shall start claims settlement operations in the closed Rural Bank of San Narciso (Quezon), Inc. for the insured deposits with balances over P10,000.00 up to the statutory limit of P100,000.00 per depositor and resume receiving/processing claims for those with balances of P10,000.00 and below. Depositors are requested to proceed directly to the premises of the said closed bank from **December 4** to **December 11, 2001**, Mondays thru Fridays, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, where PDIC representatives are stationed to accept claims and entertain queries of depositors.

   After **December 11, 2001**, all depositors can file their claims personally or thru mail at the PDIC Office located at 2228 Chino Roces Avenue, Makati City, Monday to Friday, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

2. Depositors are advised to present the following requirements to our representatives when filing their claims:
   a. Original evidence of deposit such as Savings Passbook and/or Certificate of Time Deposit; and
   b. Latest identification document (ID) bearing the depositor's signature

   Other documents may be required by our representatives in the course of their processing of claims filed.

3. Pursuant to the provisions of R.A. 3591 as amended by R.A. 7400, the prescriptive date (last day) for filing of claims for insured deposits in the closed Rural Bank of San Narciso (Quezon), Inc. is on **March 26, 2003**. After **March 26, 2003**, PDIC as insurer, shall no longer accept any claim for insured deposits maintained with the said closed bank.

PHILIPPINE DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION

(PDI - Dec. 3. 2001)

PUBLIC NOTICES

NOTICE OF LOSS

Notice is hereby given that NO KA OI PHILIPPINES INTERNATIONAL, INC. Stock Certificate Nos. 005 & 006 issued in the name of MARCELINO M. LAZARO, JR. has been reported lost per Affidavit of Loss dated 25 October, 2001. After the expiration of one year from the last publication date of this notice, if no contest has been presented to NO KA OI PHILIPPINES INTERNATIONAL, INC. the right to make such contest shall be barred and the corporation shall cancel in its books certificate of stock nos. 005 & 006 which has been reported lost and issue in lieu thereof, new certificates of stock.
PDI-Dec.3, 10 & 17, 2001

PERSONAL

PRAYER TO BLESSED MOTHER
(NEVER KNOWN TO FAIL)

O most beautiful flower of Mount Carmel, fruitful vine splendor of Heaven, Blessed Mother of the Son of God, Immaculate Virgin, assist me in this necessity, Oh star of the sea help me and show me, herein you are my Mother Oh Holy Mary, Mother of God, Queen of Heaven and Earth, I humbly beseech You from the bottom of My Heart to succor me in this necessity there are none that can withstand Your power. Oh show me herein You are Mother.

Oh Mary, conceived without sin. Pray for us who have recoursed to thee (3x).

Sweet Mother, I place this cause in Your hands (3x).

Thank you for Your mercy toward me and being mine.

Thank you Mama Mary for answering my prayers. Amen.

Republic of the Philippines
PHILIPPINE HEART CENTER
East Avenue, Quezon City 1100 Philippines • Telephone 925-24-01

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY & TO BID

The Philippine Heart Center (PHC) invites sealed written bids, re: a) supply of labor and materials for the INSTALLATION OF MEDICAL WASTE TREATMENT AND DISPOSAL SYSTEM and b) One (1) year contract for JANITORIAL SERVICES.

Only duly accredited bidders/suppliers will be allowed to participate in the bidding.

List of requirements to be submitted:

1. Letter of Intent/Company Profile
2. SEC registration
3. Business License
4. List of clients
5. Financial Statement (last 2 yrs.)
6. ITR (last 2 yrs.)
7. Location Map of Office

**for additional requirement, please inquire at Purchasing Division @ 922-05-74 and look for noemi* All interested bidders/suppliers must submit their accreditation documents on or before a) December 14, 2001 and b) December 7, 2001 at Purchasing Division.

The PHC reserves the right to disqualify any prospective bidder/s if found that they have submitted falsified documents and/or information and the right to accept or reject any bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all bids at anytime prior to award of contract, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder/s.

(Sgd.) **ROMEO J. SANTOS, M.D.**
Chairman, PBAC

(PDI--Nov. 27, 28, 29 & Dec. 3, 4 & 5, 2001)

Republic of the Philippines
FOURTH JUDICIAL REGION
REGIONAL TRIAL COURT
Branch 92
City of Calamba

Remigio A. Ching
Petitioner,
- versus - SEC CASE NO. 26-2001-C
ELMER A. CHING, ET. AL.
Respondents.
x------------------------------x

SUMMONS BY PUBLICATION

Now, therefore, you, LEONCIO A. CHING, now permanently and presently residing 9447 Lemona Avenue, North Hills, California 91343, USA is hereby enjoined to file with the Office of the Clerk of Court, Regional Trial Court, City of Calamba, your answer to the complaint within ninety (90) days from the date of the last publication thereof, furnishing a copy thereof to the complainant, Remigio A. Ching. If you fail to file your answer to the complaint within the period herein stated complainant shall demand from the court the relief prayed for in the complaint.

Let this service of summons by publication be published at the expense of the plaintiff in a newspaper of general circulation in the Philippines, once a week for three (3) consecutive weeks. Let also copy of the summons together with a copy of the complaint and the order of October 4, 2001, be deposited, postage prepaid and sent by registered mail to the defendant's last known address at the expense of the plaintiff.

WITNESS the HON. ANTONIO S. POZAS, Presiding Judge, of this Court, this 4th day of October 2001.

(Sgd.) TEOFILA C. DE VERA
Officer-in-charge

(PDI -- Dec. 3, 10 & 17, 2001)

INQUIRER TRiViA

By BONG BARRAMEDA

Rook

Q. Why the rook piece in chess shaped that way?

A. The name *rook*, for the piece sometimes known as the castle, is a corruption of the Persian word *rukh*, meaning 'chariot.' (Chess had its origins in India, and the game passed by way of Persia to the Arabs and reached Europe in about the 10th century. It's English name comes from the Persian *shah*, meaning 'king' or 'ruler.') Later the chariot came to be replaced by a piece resembling a howdah, the seat for riding on the back of an elephant, often with a canopy. It is on the howdah that the rook's modern shape was based.

Classified Odd. Chess is literally alive and moving in the Italian town of Marostica. Every two years at the main town square, people act as chessmen—knights ride horses, and page boys attend the kings and queens as pawns. The custom dates back to 1454, when two gentlemen, forbidden to fight a duel, played a chess match for the right to marry a local beauty.

Past Forward. This day in 1804: Napoleon Bonaparte crowned himself Emperor Napoleon I at Notre Dame, 11 years after France's last monarch, King Louis XIV, was guillotined. Pope Pius VII presided over the ceremony, but Napoleon placed the crown on his own head and then crowned his wife Josephine as empress.

WORD WATCH

Burloloy : a Tagalog word play on the Spanish *borla*, meaning 'tassel, tuft.'

PDI -- December 3, 2001

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☎912-9008-11 Fax 912-9011
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☎ 6350219 ☎ 6372008 Fax 6350220
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OBITUARIES

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OSCAR ROLDAN CORDERO SR.

October 24, 1927 - November 30, 2001

We, **Butch, Vicky, Andy & Pinky**, along with our families and relatives, bid goodbye to our beloved **"Dad," "Lolo Oskie"** to his grandchildren, and **"Manong Oca"** to his friends. His loving and thoughtful ways will forever remain in our hearts. Please join us as we pray for the repose of his soul and joyful meeting with God, his Creator.

His mortal remains lie in state at the Rizal Funeral Homes, Libertad Street, Pasay City. There will be a Mass at 10:00 o'clock in the morning on Wednesday, December 5, 2001, at the San Isidro Parish Church, Taft Avenue, Manila. Cremation shall follow at Loyola Memorial Chapels, Guadalupe, Makati City.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

Always caring...
INQUIRER OBITUARIES

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:
❶ Copy of Death Certificate
❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

DEATH ANNOUNCEMENT
MESSAGE OF THANKS
DEATH ANNIVERSARY
REQUIEMS
FREE OBIT DESIGN

In Loving Memory
On the **3rd Death Anniversary**

EDGARDO "NONI" TROTA

July 4, 1939 — December 3, 1998

His loving wife **Noreen**; children **Carolyn** and **Jog Salud**, **Cristina** and **Buddy Garcia**, **Robert** and **Rica Trota** and **Jimmy Trota**; grandchildren **Micah, Joseph, Miguel** and **Paolo Salud, Maxine, Martin, Nicky** and **Tianna Garcia** and **Roberto Luis Trota**; together with their family and friends request the pious readers to offer prayers for him.

Holy Masses will be offered for the eternal repose of his soul today December 3, 2001 at the following churches:

Sacred Heart Parish-Kamuning	7:00 AM	Mt. Carmel Church-New Manila	6:00 AM
Malate Church-Malate	7:00 AM	San Antonio Church-Forbes Park	7:30 AM
Don Bosco-Makati City	6:30 AM	St. Joseph The Worker-Iloilo	6:00 PM
Saint James Church	6:00 PM	Redemptorist Church-Bacolod	5:30 PM
Sto. Niño de Paz-Greenbelt	12:15 PM	Redemptorist Church-Cebu	5:30 PM
Saint Jerome Church-Alabang	6:30 PM	Redemptorist Church-Baclaran	5:00 PM
Ermita Church-Ermita	6:00 PM	Redemptorist Church-Tacloban	6:00 AM
Buru-an Church-Iligan		Agusan Church-Misamiz Occidental	
Midsalip Church-Zamboanga		Malabang Church-Lanao Del Norte	
Katipunan Church-Misamiz Occidental		Senakaban Church-Misamiz Occidental	

Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.
Matthew 10:39

Our Dearly Beloved Father

Segundo Fran Carbonilla

of Calinog Iloilo and Batangas City
Peacefully joined our Lord on November 28, 2001 at age of 77.

His loving wife **Nedy**; children **Nedeline (Bebing)** and **Nick**, **Felipe (Boy)** and **Ging**, **Ricardo (Toto)** and **Loida**, **Donna** and **Cristina (Kit)**; grandchildren, brothers, sisters, together with his nephews, nieces and other relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Rizal Funeral Homes, Inc., Pasay City. Interment will be on Wednesday, December 5, 2001, Mass will be held at Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Parish Church, Lower Bicutan, Taguig, Metro Manila at 2:00 PM.

For the needs of your departed Loved Ones, the following establishments can help you.

ARLINGTON MEMORIAL CHAPEL
12 G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City
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Tels. (0785) 522-3451; 522-2128; (0917) 434-9976
CAPITOL MEMORIAL CHAPELS INC.
1305 G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City; Tel. 732-0309; 732-1095
CEBU ROLLING HILLS MEMORIAL CHAPELS INC.
Cebu Branch: A.S. Fortuna Street, Banilad, Mandaue City, Cebu
Tels. 346-2543; 346-2601
COSMOPOLITAN FUNERAL HOMES, INC.
Nivel Hills, Lahug, Cebu City; Tels. 231-0721; 231-3192
COSMOPOLITAN FUNERAL HOMES, INC.
Camus Ext. cor. J. Abad Santos, Davao City; Tels. (082) 227-1201; 227-1258
DAYAO FUNERAL HOME
#2 Bayani St., Galas, Quezon City
Tels. 740-2683; 781-3705; 781-3688; 413-9400; 715-5594
DALLUAY MEMORIAL SERVICES
#42 Upper Kalaklan, Olongapo City
Tels. (047) 222-3605; (047) 811-1086; (047) 222-4512; (047) 224-2014
DON BOSCO CHAPELS
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DULCE MEMORIAL SERVICES
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Tel. Nos. (035) 225-5796/225-4364
Mr. Ramon Charles Sy
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Tel. Nos. (035) 225-4320/422-7452
Fax No. (035) 255-1182
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Marquez News & Magazine Agency
Marquez Building, 51 Sinsuat Avenue
Cotabato City
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(064) 229-7089 (Lolot - Secretary)
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Dabaw Periodicals, Inc.
Santos Building, Gov. Duterte Street
Davao City (fronting Galleria Hotel)
Tel. Nos. (082) 226-4406/221-3379/
221-3424/226-2931

Babasahin ATBP.
Lower Level, Gaisano Mall
Bajada, Davao City
Ground Floor, Victoria Plaza
Bajada, Davao City
Tel. Nos. (082) 221-3927/227-4410/300-2920
General Santos
Mr. Ramon Dimalanta
GSC Newscenter, Dimalanta Building
35 Pioneer Avenue, General Santos City
Tel. Nos. (083) 301-8731/301-6244
Pagadian City
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Edmar News - Advertising Agency
Bonifacio Street, Pagadian City
Tel. Nos. (062) 215-1448/214-2641
Cell. No. (0919) 660-0001
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Marien's Variety Store
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Tel. Nos. (062) 991-4294/991-0073
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c/o Norie Bautista
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Global Mutual - Sharing Principle is our revolutionary way of creating avenues of unlimited opportunities for the common people specially the Consumers. We aim to empower Consumers by providing them:

* Conducive environment for the strengthening of our "bayanihan" culture.
* High quality goods at affordable prices
* Power to earn while they spend at the same time
* Computer and E-Commerce Training and Education
* Computer ownership made easy with internet access.
* Housing programs
* Insurance and pension coverage
* Convenience shopping and wise-buys as we fully launch our RISE Cybermall, Vend-O-RISE, RISE Convenience Stores and RISE E-Card...soon.
* Plus! Unlimited income and business opportunities specially for those who are willing to work with us hand in hand to realize our vision and that is to - EMPOWER CONSUMERS and help in Poverty Alleviation.

We are now establishing and strengthening over 40 Business Center and Sub-Center Operations nationwide and we are welcoming socially-conscientious business partners whose prime motivation is - **SERVICE** over and above profit.

Join us now! Join our movement towards Consumers Empowerment.
Visit our Business Center Operations (BCOs)/Sub-Center Operations (SCOs) nearest you.

RISE E-COMMERCE SYSTEMS
Valentino Ocampo

Parties who are interested to apply as Business Partners or Center Operators may call our:
Customer Relations Department
Tel. Nos. (02) 687-0941/687-1737/ 687-2917
For on-line registration and inquiries log on to our website:
www.rise-ecommerce.com
E-mail address: *inquiry@rise-ecommerce.com*
Or Text us at: (0919) 6727808/(0919) 5924258/
(0919) 2123230/(0916) 3960968
Or you may visit us at:
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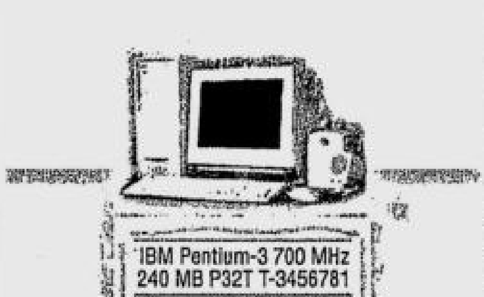

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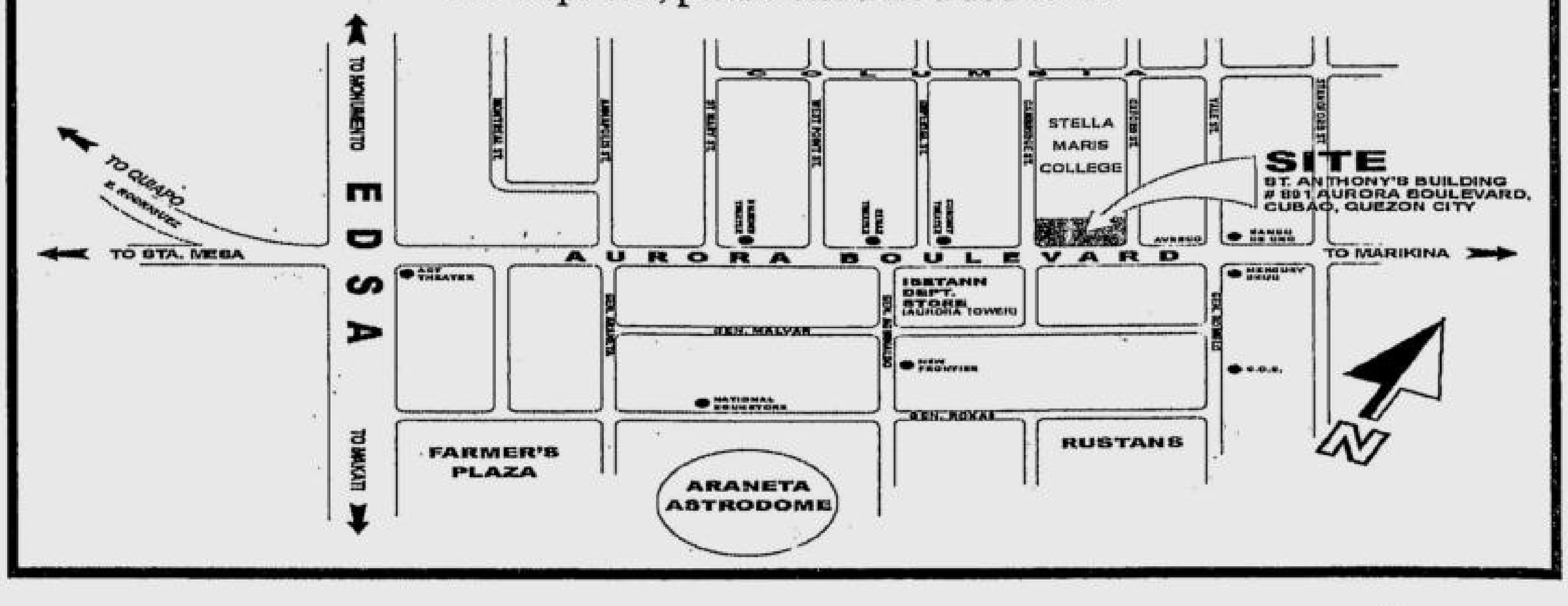

US economy slumps sharply in 3rd quarter

WASHINGTON—The US economy slumped much more sharply during the third quarter than first thought, the government said on Friday in a report that prompted fresh White House demands for stimulus measures to help pull out of recession.

The Commerce Department said gross domestic product, the broadest measure of total economic activity within US borders, contracted at a revised 1.1 percent annual rate in the three months from July through September for its sharpest fall in more than a decade.

That was triple the 0.4-percent rate of decline estimated a month ago and was the poorest quarterly economic performance since a 2-percent contraction in the first three months of 1991, when the economy was last in recession.

Business profits—vital for fueling investment that helped power the record expansion after the 1990-1991 recession—completed a full year of decline by shrinking once more during the third quarter.

President George W. Bush quickly renewed a call for Congress to approve economic stimulus measures. These have become embroiled in partisan differences about whether more tax cuts or increased spending would produce the quickest and most useful benefits.

"The president believes that, given this latest report, it's just unimaginable that the Senate could possibly leave town without completing its work on the stimulus," White House spokesperson Ari Fleischer said.

Congress wants to wrap up business and recess for the year, while Bush is insisting that lawmakers agree upon stimulative measures that he can sign into law by Christmas.

On Monday, the National Bureau of Economic Research that dates US business cycles said the United States entered recession in March.

Stock prices showed scant reaction, with the Dow Jones industrial average rising 22.14 points to end at 9,851.56 while the Nasdaq composite index eased 2.68 points at 1,930.58.

Bond prices were mostly firmer on optimism that more interest-rate cuts lay in store in view of the fact that the economy might be weaker than previously anticipated.

Economist Lyle Gramley of the Mortgage Bankers Association said the steady fall in business profits was "one more reason for thinking that while we likely are going to get out of this recession fairly soon, it's going to be a slow rebound."

One of the key reasons for the revision in the third-quarter GDP figures, to show an even steeper contraction, was that the US trade performance weakened sharply as foreigners bought fewer American-made goods. *Reuters*

Economy seen rebounding in mid-2002

PHILADELPHIA—The US economy likely would rebound in mid-2002, the head of the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia said on Friday, while Fed chair Alan Greenspan predicted US productivity gains would continue.

The comments, along with those by the head of the St. Louis Fed, came less than two weeks before the US central bank's last interest-rate meeting of the year but provided few clues about future Fed policy.

Many economists predict the Fed will cut interest rates for the 11th time this year when it meets on Dec. 11. Currently, interest rates are at their lowest level in 40 years.

While Philadelphia Fed president Anthony Santomero said he expected a turnaround next year, he said rising joblessness would continue to strain the ailing US economy.

"The softness in labor markets puts pressure on consumer spending and consumer confidence," Santomero told reporters at a forum on monetary policy sponsored by the Philadelphia Fed.

"That is why I think we have a bit longer to go before this recession turns its corner," he said.

A six-member panel at the National Bureau of Economic Research declared this week the US economy was in a recession, confirming what many economists already believed.

But Santomero said the Fed's interest rate cuts were beginning to take effect, especially in the housing and durable goods sectors, and that consumer spending, which accounted for two-thirds of US economic activity, had been resilient.

"At this point, the consumer has held up reasonably well," Santomero said. "I personally think we are looking at mid-2002 for the beginning of the recovery."

The US unemployment rate rose to 5.4 percent in October, the highest level in nearly five years, as a labor market that was already sagging was hit hard by the attacks on Sept. 11. Economists say the biggest determinant of consumer spending is job and income security.

In a separate appearance, Greenspan said it was likely US productivity growth, key to boosting standards of living, would be slightly positive in the current quarter. Usually, productivity growth declines in economic downturns. *Reuters*

FEDERAL Reserve Board chair Alan Greenspan, left, speaks before the Euro 50 Group, a panel of European business leaders, in Washington. Greenspan said the dollar's strength against the new European currency, the euro, stemmed from America's better performance in boosting the productivity of the workforce. Edmond Alphandery, chair of the group, is at right. AP

US dotcom layoffs eased in November

NEW YORK—The number of dot-com job cuts fell 40 percent in November from the previous month amid cautious hopes that the battered Internet industry may show some improvement for the yearend holiday season, a survey showed Friday.

Challenger Gray and Christmas, a firm that tracks daily job-cut announcements, said dotcom firms cut 2,901 position in November, a sharp decline from the 4,840 in October.

The figure was also 67 percent lower than in November 2000, when 8,789 jobs were eliminated.

Still, the year-to-date cuts in the industry were 98,522, more than double the figure for 2000 of 41,515.

"Dotcoms are still being affected by the loss of online advertising revenue and the hesitancy of financial backers, making this industry all the more tenuous," said John Challenger, chief executive officer of the consulting firm.

Challenger noted that some reports suggested the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks and subsequent anthrax scare would induce more people to shop online this year.

"It has become a constant challenge for businesses to maintain profitability. It is hoped that the holiday season will provide a much-needed boost to this struggling sector." *AFP*

Investors buy more individual bonds

NEW YORK—In a year when many investors have rediscovered the bond market and made a bond fund the year's top selling mutual fund, they are discovering individual corporate bonds, too.

Since January, Incapital LLC has sold directly to ordinary investors $4.2 billion worth of "InterNotes" of banking giant Bank of America Corp., automaker DaimlerChrysler AG and a unit of consumer finance company Household International Inc., with a minimum, no-commission purchase of $1,000.

Now that investors are growing even more cautious, after a 20-month slump in stocks and the Sept. 11 attacks, the founder and president of Incapital, which has 22 employees in Chicago's Loop, is expecting even more investors to discover individual corporate bonds, even though the US economy is in recession.

"There's never a bad time to be conservative with some of your investments," said Thomas Ricketts, 36, whose father founded discount broker Ameritrade Holding Corp. "People are much more deliberate about maintaining their slice of the asset allocation pie in bonds, and much more deliberate about what bonds they're putting in there."

In an October survey commissioned by Incapital, 36 percent of financial consultants said they sold more bonds, a kind of corporate IOU, since the attacks, while only 11 percent sold fewer.

This sped up the yearlong trend in which investors have thrown money at bonds. Three of the four top-selling mutual funds this year have been bond funds, Boston's Financial Research Corp. said. Leading the way: Bill Gross' $50-billion PIMCO Total Return Fund, with $7.7 billion of inflows.

What distinguishes Incapital, Ricketts said, and a similar "Direct Access Notes" program run by ABN Amro's LaSalle Broker Dealer Services division, was that investors could buy individual corporate bonds in a variety of maturities without the middleman. They have a week to decide whether to buy each issue, and the terms don't change, even if the markets do.

This can help investors buy bonds yielding 30 to 40 percent more than ultra-safe US government bonds that yield a mere 2.5 to 5 percent—and without the mutual fund management fees that can slice heavily into investor total returns.

"People are starting to realize that bond funds are charging 75 basis points (0.75 percentage points) a year" as yields fall, he said. "They're not cutting their fees, but they're cutting your returns."

A typical InterNotes investor is aged 55 to 65, buys $15,000 to $20,000 of a bond issue for the long haul and wants income while preserving capital, Ricketts said.

"Their only true concern is: Is this a fair amount of return I'm getting for the credit risk and will I get repaid?" he said. *Reuters*

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Martin Nievera is Smart's latest endorser

SMART Communications recently launched its latest celebrity endorser, the Mad Man himself, Martin Nievera. The launch took place in Cebu, highlighted by two major activities.

In a press conference held at Jiggy's Bar in the posh Waterfront Hotel, Smart unveiled it's latest jingle, Simply Amazing, a ballad sung by Martin. Present during the program was Boy Martirez, head of personal communications and mobile services and Mon Isberto, head of public affairs (who also served as host), and of course, Martin Nievera, with the local and national media.

Martin expressed his pleasure in being part of the Smart family, and intimated that he has been a Smart patron even before he became its main endorser. "I am so proud and honored to be part of the Smart family," he said.

The press conference was followed by a free concert at the Crossroads Grounds. A huge screen was mounted at the left side of the stage, to allow all fans a full view of that they went on onstage. Front act Barbie's Cradle was first to perform a string of popular hits, mostly alternative songs interspersed with their own hits.

As the audience waited for Martin to appear, his voice was heard but no Martin appeared onstage. He appeared from behind the revolving giant screen where everyone could see him, much to the delight of the audience. Hundreds of fans screamed as Martin rendered ballads as well as fast numbers. Throughout his performance, his cell phone announced incoming messages, which were requests from the audience.. His Ricky Martin finale was majestic, as he ended his final song amid awesome fireworks and the lighted billboard that spelled Smart: Simply Amazing. Minutes after Martin had left the stage, audiences were still gaping at the sky, admiring the fireworks display.

It was a night made memorable by Smart, the force that gave this free concert to convey its market leadership. Smart Communications truly gets its message across.

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at Crossroads, November 22 - 8pm

LOVELY Bianca Araneta hosts the Smart free concert at the Crossroads, Cebu.

MTV jock Sarah Meier with Smart well-wishers during the free concert sposored by Smart. The concert was held at the Crossroads grounds in Cebu.

BOY Martirez, head of personal communications and mobile services of Smart Communications and Martin Nievera, the latest Smart endorser, together during the contract-signing ceremony in a Smart press conference held at Jiggy's Bar, Waterfront Hotel in Cebu.

Martin expressed his pleasure in being part of the Smart family, and intimated that he has been a Smart patron even before he became its main endorser

MARTIN renders his final song, with fireworks and the Smart Simply Amazing logo lighting up as colorful backdrops.

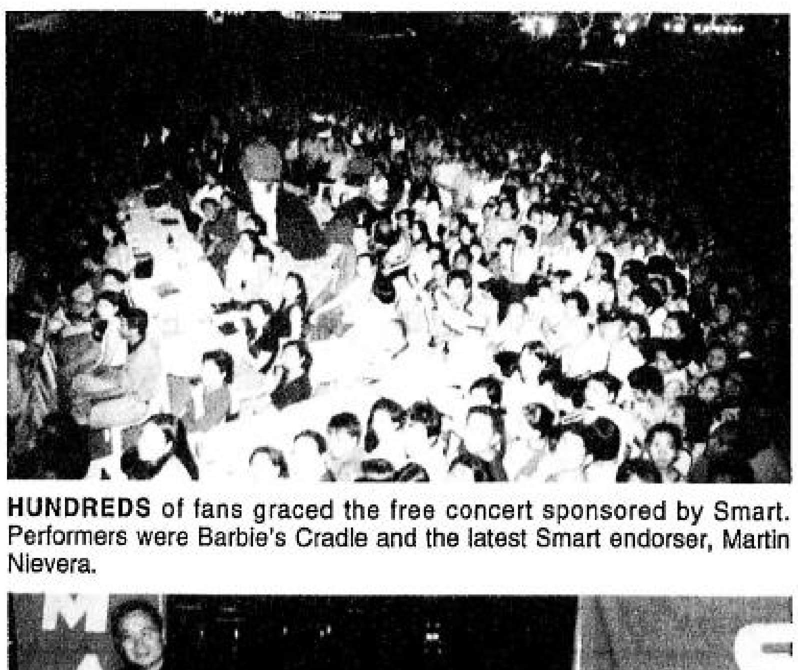
FROM left, Atom Henares, JM Rodriguez, Claudine Trillo, Tim Yap, Alks Porraz and Joey Mead. Seated is Elizabeth Timbol.

THE BEAUTIFUL people of Smart; models promoting Smart's fun events in Cebu.

BOY, Martin, and Mon Isberto, Smart head of public affairs, pose for the press during Martin's launch as Smart endorser.

BARBIE's Cradle opens the concert with a string of popular alternative songs as part of the free concert sponsored by Smart. The concert was held at the Crossroads grounds in Cebu.

FROM left, Marvin Agustin, Rezza Custodio of Smart, Rico Yan and Dominic Ochoa flash their winning smiles.


HUNDREDS of fans graced the free concert sponsored by Smart. Performers were Barbie's Cradle and the latest Smart endorser, Martin Nievera.

MARTIN Nievera, Smart's latest endorser, answers questions from the press during a Smart press conference held at Jiggy's Bar, Waterfront Hotel in Cebu. Looking on are Mon Isberto (at the podium) and Boy Martirez, head of personal communications and mobile services of Smart Communications.

New Smart Man Martin says life is now just 'Simply Amazing'

THE WORLD-CLASS, multi-talented entertainer has just been signed in by cellular phone giant Smart Communications as their celebrity endorser.

Never at a loss for words, the Mad Man proclaimed, "Since I got Smart, my life's just been simply amazing."

And it surely looks that way.

Martin now seems to have found his second wind. After years of knocking on the door of his dream of international stardom, he finally has a foot in – or in his words, his "big toe." The Concert King has a number of scheduled performances in the United States, mostly in Las Vegas, a city that relies on top entertainment to draw top dollar from the world's top gamblers. By simply being invited to perform there, this brings Martin at par with some of the world's amazing talents. He also adds that he is "very excited" about an upcoming international album.

Being very hands-on in his career and given his very busy schedule, Martin himself oversees negotiations for his local and foreign engagements. To stay in touch with possible promoters, he uses Smart zed's mobile mail to check his e-mail, and Smart international direct dialing (IDD) – which allows him to return calls of foreign promoters. Of course, Smart zed foreign exchange and international and local news updates come in quite handy when he is abroad.

Despite his numerous international commitments next year, Martin won't be totally absent from the Philippines. His fans will continue to see him host pre-taped episodes of ''Martin Late at Night'' on ABS-CBN and soon also on Studio 23. And what about his kids, Robin and Ram?

"Well, with my Smart Gold cellphone," Martin smiles, "my family is just a speed dial away – even if I'm in the States because I can roam using Smart's international roaming feature."

The proud father says he's also gotten his kids Smart Buddy cellphones with activated Smart Money accounts, which they can use for emergency purchases – particularly when he's out of the country. He simply transfers money into their accounts from his own Smart Money account at his convenience.

"I just feel a bit more at east," he admits, "knowing that they can have access to money for needs that may suddenly come up – all they've got to do is bring their cellphones and Smart Money cards with them.''

Martin is also excited about a new sound he is trying to incorporate in his music. "I was talking to Kenny Loggins last April, and he told me that there's so much to learn from the new artists like 98 Degrees and N' Sync," Martin said. In his new album, where he wrote a number of sings, including the soon-to-be-released ''Simply Amazing'', fans will hear a more contemporary twist to the performer, who first rose to stardom in the '80s behind the ballads ''By My Lady'' and ''Ikaw ang Lahat sa Akin''. Nineteen years into his career, Nievera says he has to keep reinventing himself to remain appealing to audiences.

And he is getting much-deserved recognition for his craft.

Martin relates that on Brian McKnight's recent trip to Manila, the R&B star caught one of his all sold-out, 30-show series at Onstage and was all praises for him, even saying "Martin performs as if it's his last show–and he sings and talks for three whole hours!"

This made the Smart connection fit just right. According to Boy R. Martirez, head of personal communications and mobile services division of Smart Communications, Inc., "We were looking for a celebrity endorser who embodies the values of Smart: being world-class, gifted with amazing talent, excelling in his chosen field, working to constantly innovate and improve, and for simply being recognized for all his efforts. Martin is all these.''

"Smart and I share a common mission: we both want to communicate with as many people as possible – both here and around the world – with a clear, distinct voice," Martin adds.

With the luck he's been having, who can argue that life for the Mad Man has indeed been "Simply Amazing."

10-yr. Mekong trade deal signed

SIX countries bordering the Mekong River have adopted a 10-year strategy to boost cooperation within the region, the Asian Development Bank said in a statement issued here Saturday.

Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam and China's Yunnan province adopted the strategy at a ministerial conference held in Myanmar under the assistance of the ADB.

As part of the strategy, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam signed a cross-border agreement to facilitate the movement of people and goods.

China and Myanmar are expected to join the agreement in the near future, the ADB said.

The strategy includes a detailed action plan for the next three years that involves 10 flagship projects that will require $900 million in investment financing and $30 million in technical assistance, the ADB said.

Among the identified projects are economic corridors spanning the entire region, a telecommunications backbone, a regional power interconnection and trading arrangement, enhanced private sector participation and competitiveness, human resources development, flood control and water management, and a strategic environmental framework, the ADB added.

The multilateral institution said it would form a "GMS Donors Coordination Meeting" and encourage more private sector participation to raise these funds.

The strategy also includes further cooperation by setting up a policy environment and infrastructure linkages that will expand cross-border investment, tourism and trade.

To ensure that the development process is equitable, GMS countries were advised to fully respect environmental and social concerns in implementing the strategy, the ADB added.

The GMS program started in 1992 with the assistance of the ADB, which helped build up trust and confidence among the members through conferences and joint initiatives. *AFP*

Canada may be headed for recession in 2nd half

OTTAWA—Canada appears to be joining the United States in a recession in the second half of 2001, Finance Minister Paul Martin said Friday.

The economy shrank by 0.2 percent in the third quarter, or by an annual rate of 0.8 percent, according to a report Friday by Statistics Canada, the government agency.

It was the first quarterly decline since 1992, and the September performance amounted to a 0.8-percent drop in gross domestic product, the agency said.

"Clearly, with the recent announcement that the US is in recession, and given the shocks to the economy of Sept. 11, which we said were going to be difficult, this is not unexpected," Martin said.

On Thursday, Bank of Canada governor David Dodge predicted a decline in the fourth quarter, which Martin said would be "the technical definition of a recession."

"We're in a period of real global weakness," Martin said. "This is manifest in the sharp contraction of the US numbers, and this is going to have an inevitable impact on Canada."

In the last year, gross domestic product growth averaged 0.2 percent compared with 1.1 percent in the preceding four quarters, Statistics Canada reported.

Then came the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks in the United States that badly damaged the travel sector and affected other industries.

"The events of Sept. 11 and scheduled production shutdowns exacerbated the prevailing weakness in the economy," Statistics Canada said in a news release.

Eighteen of 21 major manufacturing groups surveyed by Statistics Canada reported declines in September. Hardest hit were travel-related industries, off 19.1 percent from the month before.

Motor vehicle assembly was down 6.6 percent, while oil and coal production fell 10.7 compared with the previous month, according to the September survey.

Martin, who will introduce a new budget on Dec. 10 to account for spending on anti-terrorism measures in the wake of the Sept. 11 attacks, has said the Canadian and North American economic outlook was uncertain in the short term, but strong in the medium- and long-term. *AP*

Kraft to close 2 plants, shift production

NORTHFIELD—Kraft Foods Inc., the No. 1 North American food company, said on Friday that it would shutter two Latin American plants, cut more than 500 jobs and consolidate other operations in the region, as it continued to digest its acquisition of cookie-maker Nabisco.

Manufacturing plant closures in Guatemala City and San Jose, Costa Rica, will result in the elimination of about 120 jobs, Northbrook, Illinois-based Kraft said. The Guatemala plant will close effective Nov. 30, while the Costa Rica plant will halt production on April 30 next year.

Kraft, the maker of Oscar Meyer meats and Post Cereals, also said it would downsize two cashew facilities in Brazil and a grocery manufacturing plant in Valencia, Venezuela. The restructuring of these facilities will result in the layoff of another 420 employees.

The latest moves come on the heels of an earlier restructuring of Kraft's operations in Latin America, including the sale of two Brazilian businesses—a dairy and a pasta and biscuit business—and the closure of plants in Uruguay, Ecuador and Chile, announced in October.

Kraft, which has more than 115,000 employees worldwide, has been cutting costs since its buyout of Nabisco, the maker of Oreos and other cookies, late last year. The deal is expected to produce $100 million in savings this year.

"Our goal is to accomplish these organizational changes with minimal disruption to the business and maximum sensitivity to those involved," Joachim Krawczyk, president of Kraft's Latin American business, said.

Production at the Guatemalan and Costa Rica facilities, which mostly consists of dry mix, baking powder and ready-to-eat gelatin, will shift to a Kraft facility in San Jose, Costa Rica. *Reuters*

Kimberly-Clark to close 5 plants

DALLAS—Consumer paper goods company Kimberly-Clark Corp. said on Friday that it was on track to meeting Wall Street earnings estimates through 2002 as currency exchange factors and energy costs took less of a toll on its bottom line.

The maker of Kleenex tissues, Huggies diapers and Scott toilet paper also said on a conference call with analysts that it would close five plants employing 2 percent of its workforce amid a slackening of demand, particularly in hotels, airports and other away-from-home venues following the Sept. 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

The company said it had seen some improvement in its away-from-home business but expected softness in that area to continue at least through the next three to six months.

"I think that they are being prudently conservative on most assumptions going into next year," said Bernstein analyst Jim Gingrich. "The unknown is just how competitive it is going to be."

In October, Kimberly-Clark posted its first quarterly profit decline in three years due to reduced demand, poor results at a Mexican joint venture and adverse foreign exchange factors.

The company told analysts in the conference call that it would close four small plants in Latin America and one in the United States, affecting 1,400 employees. *Reuters*

Top Oracle executive quits

SAN FRANCISCO—Software giant Oracle Corp. has disclosed that another of its top executives has defected from the company, continuing a management drain that has raised investor concerns.

Jay Nussbaum is stepping down as an executive vice president of service industries after 10 years at Oracle to accept a job at one of the company's business partners, Oracle chief executive Larry Ellison said in a memo to employees on Friday. Without specifically identifying the company, Ellison said Nussbaum was "joining one of (Oracle's) largest and most important partners in a very senior role."

Nussbaum, 58, becomes the third top Oracle executive to leave the company during the past 17 months. The defections have worried investors who believe Oracle is better off with a group of seasoned executives to counterbalance the mercurial Ellison.

Last year, Ray Lane left as Oracle's chief operating officer after a falling out with Ellison. Gary Bloom, the executive who oversaw much of Oracle's push to become the world's leading maker of Internet software, departed a few months later to become chief executive of a smaller Silicon Valley company, Veritas Software.

Like Bloom, Nussbaum apparently decided to leave because Ellison did not intend to step down as Oracle's chief executive anytime soon. An Oracle spokesperson said Nussbaum was leaving on "amicable" terms. *AP*

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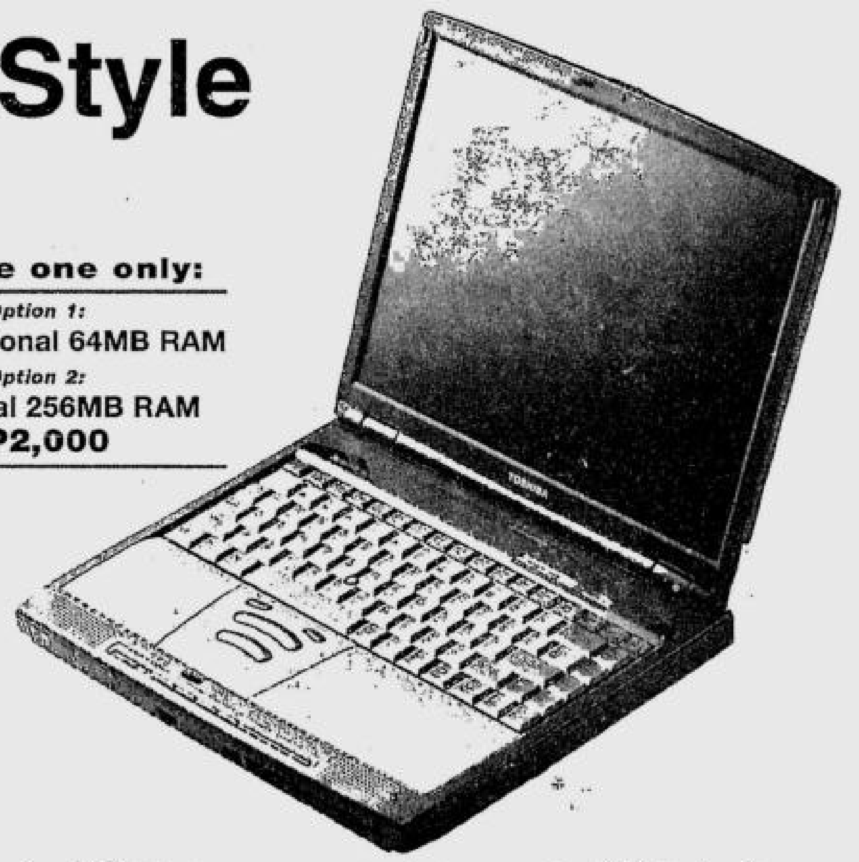

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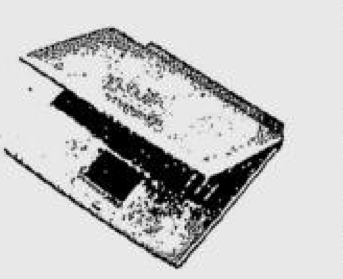

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BOP deficit seen staying below $2B

By Clarissa S. Batino

BANGKO Sentral Governor Rafael Buenaventura said he was confident that the country's balance-of-payments deficit would stay below $2 billion and the gross international reserves would be above $14 billion by year's end.

"I think the BOP would be close to $1.9 billion," the central bank chief said.

Buenaventura said his confidence was based on the successful borrowing activities of the Bangko Sentral and the national government. The central bank's four-year bond transaction was 2.75 times oversubscribed and enabled it to raise $550 million.

He said he also believed that the decline in exports has bottomed and this could arrest a further erosion of the BOP position. The government is expecting export earnings to contract by 15 percent this year.

The central bank governor said the payments deficit was not expected to reach the Bangko Sentral's worst-case scenario of $2.4 billion even after the eight-month BOP deficit had swelled to $1.133 billion from a $65-million surplus a year ago.

In August alone, the BOP deficit had gone up by $216 million. As of October, the dollar reserves slightly slipped to $14.411 billion from $14.549 billion a month ago.

Foreign investors and creditors use the dollar reserves and the external payments position as important measures of the country's ability to settle its obligations and whether it could maintain healthy trade relations with other countries.

A BOP deficit means more funds slipped out of the country that the amount of inflow as a result of trade and debt transactions with other economies.

The level of dollar reserves indicates the country's ability to settle its imports and shows by how much the central bank can defend the currency.

Buenaventura admitted that the Bangko Sentral would preserve the dollar reserves above the psychological level of $14 billion because a decline below this point usually triggers an unwarranted speculation in the foreign exchange market.

Aside from the Bangko Sentral borrowing, the governor was counting on the foreign loans of the national government to boost the dollar reserves.

The government has raised a fresh $406 million from the yen bond market that it would use for next year's budget. For the meantime, it would stay in the Bangko Sentral's vaults and would be counted as part of the Philippines' dollar reserves together with gold and other currencies.

The foreign borrowings of the government are also booked as inflow in the BOP and would help arrest the decline in the payments position.

The BOP position is based on current account that measures mainly the country's export and import performance and on the capital and financial account that tracks the flow of foreign direct investments, portfolio investments, and debt.

As of end-August, the current account still managed to post a surplus of $1.541 billion but this was 72.4 percent lower than a year ago surplus of $5.589 billion.

In the first eight months of the year, exports of electronics fell by 22 percent while garments shipment contracted by 21 percent. However, imports also slowed to $22.911 billion as of August from $26.621 billion a year ago.

Spanish firm keen on sale of power unit

By Ronnel W. Domingo

AN ENERGY-BASED firm from Spain has recently approached officials of National Transmission Corp. in view of its plans to take part in Transco's privatization slated early next year, a source privy to the matter said last week.

"The Spanish firm is one of the biggest energy companies in Europe," the source said.

He added that the representatives of the firm have been initiating talks with Transco officials through its local office.

He could not say whether the Spanish firm was inclined to buy Transco or apply for a concession to operate it.

Last week, Energy Secretary Vicente Perez Jr. said the government was confident it could stick to its schedule of privatizing Transco in the second quarter of 2002 even though the joint congressional power commission has yet to approve National Power Corp.'s privatization plan.

In an earlier interview, Edgardo del Fonso, who is president of the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp., said about 10 European and Asian investors have expressed interest in Transco.

Del Fonso said the investors wanted to participate in Transco's privatization through investment banks.

Transco, formerly a part of Napocor, was made independent under the Electric Power Industry Reform Act.

The same law created Psalm Corp., which would completely take over by Dec. 27 all of Napocor's disposable assets and assume its financial obligations as of end-2000.

He would not say whether Transco would be sold or offered for concession, but he noted that most other countries that privatized power transmission services favored concessions.

Also, Del Fonso said the manner of privatizing Transco would not affect its value.

He declined to say how much Transco was valued although earlier reports said the government was aiming for at least $2.4 billion in proceeds.

Also, Perez said European investors like Electricité de France and National Grid Plc of the United Kingdom have expressed interest in Transco.

A Transco official also said Japan's Kyushu Electric Corp. and Electric Power Development Corp. were also interested.

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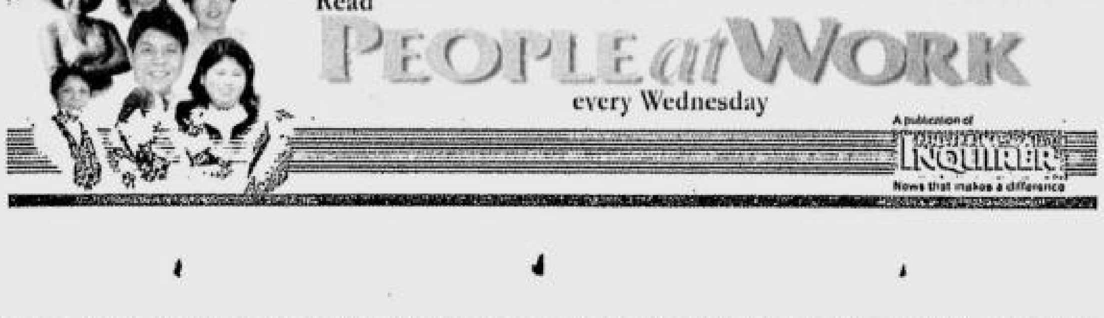

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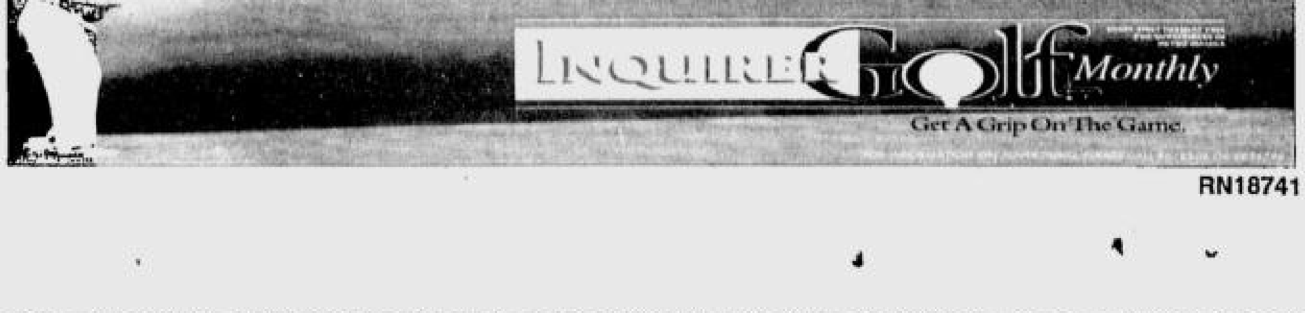

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Will China put more pressure on the peso?

By Dennis M. Arroyo

CHINESE canned fruits, Maxam toothpaste, Maling luncheon meat. They are all cheap products that ease the budget of Filipino families. But they may herald difficulties for the Philippine economy.

Inflation this year plays around 2 percent in Asia, and it may range from 4-6 percent in the Philippines. It's even worse in Indonesia, at 10-12 percent. Now, business should watch out for China, which is going through negative inflation, or deflation. Falling prices in the Middle Kingdom mean trouble washing into Manila bay.

This is the problem: the Philippine economy is lethargic because of the global downturn before and after Sept. 11. But when prices plunge in China, its exports also become cheaper. That threatens greater competition for exports from the rest of Asia, including the Philippines. That in turn puts pressure on the peso to depreciate or fall again.

Export juggernaut

China is a crouching tiger no longer hidden from world prominence. During the first half of 2001, its gross domestic product grew by a hefty 7.9 percent, says the Economist Intelligence Unit. This is in tandem with its 10.1 percent growth rate for industry and 11-percent growth in manufactured exports.

Some may doubt the figures, but they are consistent with other indicators of growth: a rise of 10 percent in energy consumption and 7 percent in freight tonnage.

The strength of China's exports can be seen in research from the American embassy in Beijing, cited by Business 2.0. A study has found that a third of China's exports to the United States don't have real competition from other nations in Asia.

For example, China exports 22 times as many shoes as the total exported by the rest of Asia. Then another third have little competition—China exports 5 to 7 times as much as these products shipped from the rest of Asia.

In contrast, Philippine exports have been dropping. The figure for January to September 2001 is 14 percent less than that for the same period in 2000.

Too many motorcycles

Take the case of motorcycles, as noted by the Asian Wall Street Journal.

The motorcycle industry in China manufactures about 10 million bikes a year.

Now, it so happens that the Chinese would rather save up for a car, so demand is weak. This has pushed down the price of motorcycles, and competing manufacturers like India are worried.

Despite a 65-percent tariff, Chinese motorcycle imports are still 20 percent cheaper than Indian bikes.

Because of too much production, prices of motorcycles have fallen 30 percent over the past year. The trend is seen in electronic products as well. Videodisk players have dropped by 20-30 percent in 2000.

This is pushing manufacturers to look abroad for more markets. That sort of thinking, covering everything from canned food to TV sets, threatens to knock the rest of Asia.

Causes of deflation

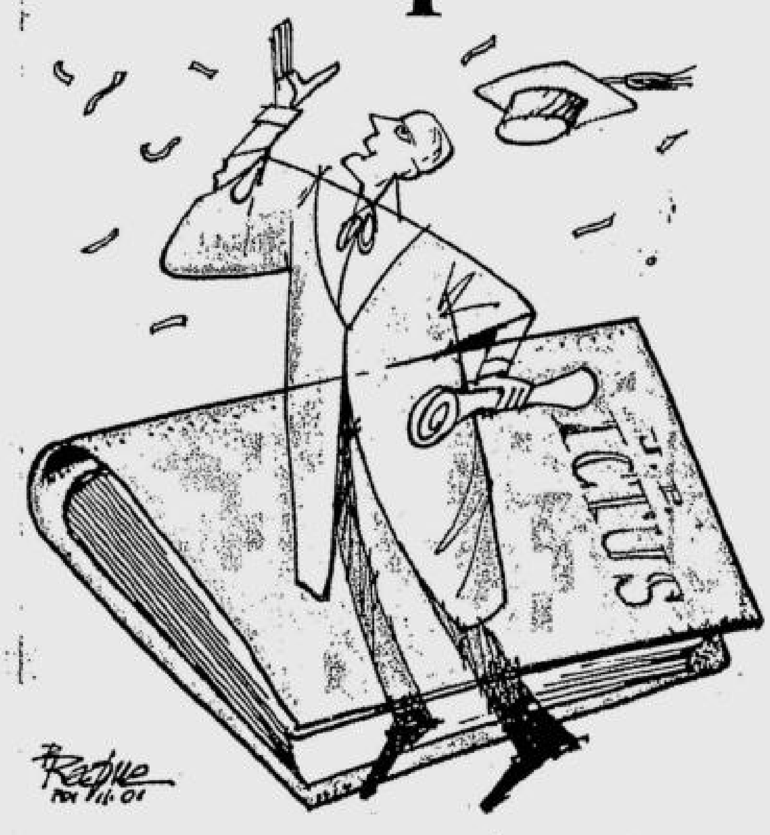
The trend of huge deflation is not really recent. By the middle of 1998, the retail price index was falling at 3 percent per year. The state had to impose price controls to stop prices from plunging too steeply, wrecking farm incomes.

China is burdened by vast over capacity, and this sweeps everything, from factories, infrastructure, to real estate. According to BCA China Analyst, Chinese industry was using only 50 percent of its capacity in 1998.

Then consider the explosive growth of Shanghai's first-class office space.

According to C.Y. Leung, a Hong Kong property company, the figure for this was 2.5 million square meters in 1996, 4.5 million

WILL CHINA/ C2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JOSE Luis Romero-Salas

As in baseball, a manager's job is to keep the morale up

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

MANAGEMENT
STYLES

FOR the tall and fair Jose Luis Romero-Salas, managing TNT Express Worldwide (Phils.) Inc. can be compared to the management of his son's Little League baseball team.

It all boils down to the ability to motivate people, says Romero-Salas, country general manager of Netherlands-based TNT.

"Just like in baseball, a manager should be there to keep the morale up when things seem down, to convince them that they can still win even if they are down and with the odds against them," says the 42-year-old Romero-Salas.

And also just like in baseball, a manager has to rely on trusted lieutenants to do specific tasks and do them well. There are different coaches for pitching, running and hitting, just like there are different people assigned for finance, operations, administration and manufacturing in a corporation.

As country general manager for TNT which has around 200 employees, he is responsible for overseeing the overall business operations of TNT Philippines including Global Express Documents, Parcels and Freight, Logistics and International Mail.

He also stresses the importance of communication between the players and the management to make the team win. Each player is assigned a specific task, and they are expected to perform the best they can for the good of the team.

"Just like in baseball, people in a corporation are part of a team. In a corporation, there should be an opportunity to be the best as an individual and as a team," Romero-Salas says.

For the good of the team, Romero-Salas says a manager should also be ready to make difficult decisions and deal with different shareholders.

"In baseball, you have to decide who will play and who won't and you also have to deal with different people involved in the game like the parents and the officials and the players. It is the same in managing a company. You have to make difficult decisions and do them quickly," he says.

"I always say that it is better to make a wrong decision fast than the right decision made too late. This is because at least you move somewhere even if it is the wrong decision," Romero-Salas explains.

One of these decisions was TNT's move to go for the logistics business, which covers the distribution of products for large multinational companies across the country using TNT's facilities.

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AS/ C2

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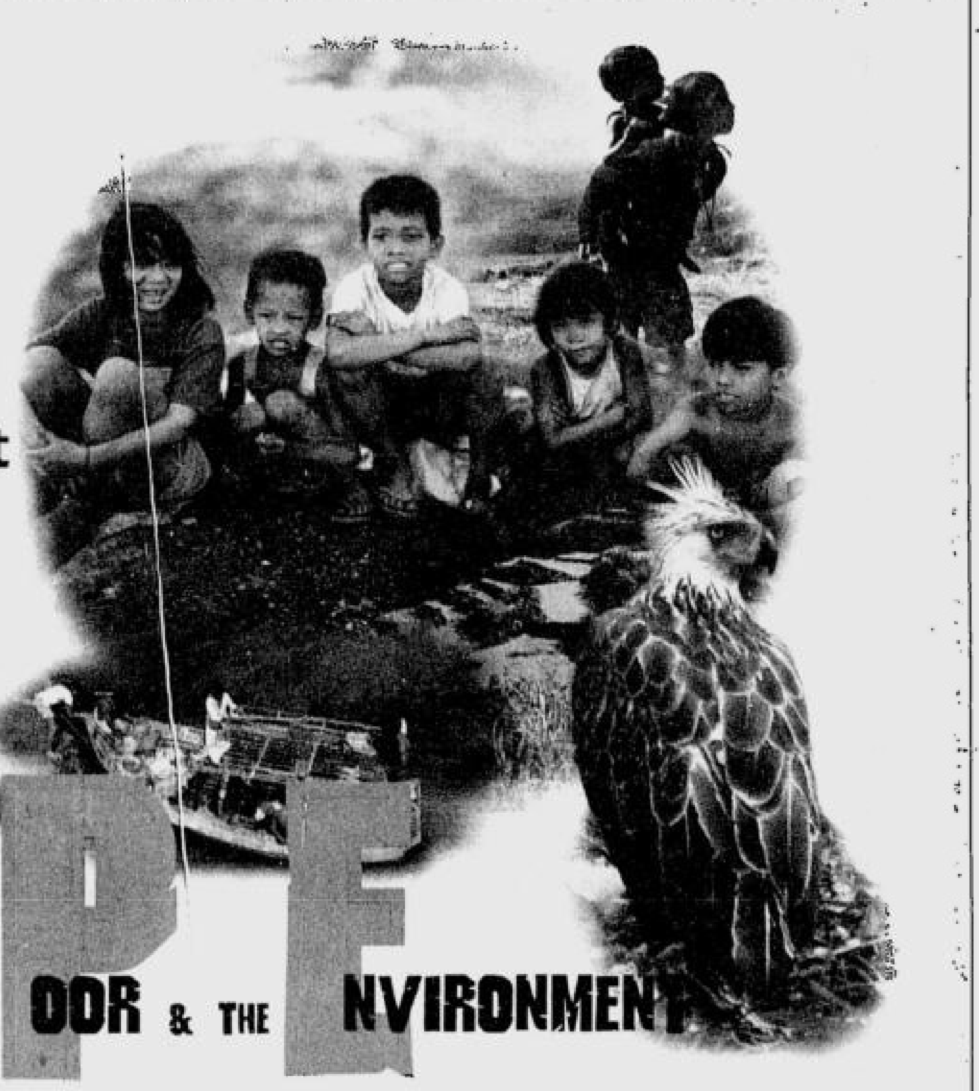

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Business ethics and corporate governance

MAPping THE FUTURE

Medel T. Nera and Leonardo J. Matignas Jr.

IN OUR work as business advisers, we get to hear clients' problems about their people—fast turnover, absenteeism, and carelessness at work.

It is tempting to look back and say, "In the good old days, employees were more trustworthy."

That point is of course debatable. But there's no denying that people today are different from what they were, say, 20 or 30 years ago. And as far as morality is concerned, people have become cynical.

When fraud raises its ugly head, a company can suffer massive business losses, more so if the fraud occurs at a high level.

Recently, Andersen's Business Fraud and Investigation Services unit in Manila was engaged by a major manufacturing company to investigate a multimillion-dollar account misstatement fraud by senior management. The investigation resulted in the board of directors terminating the company president, CFO, and four managers.

The risks associated with fraud can be likened to rocks on the sea bed which are under water in high tide and exposed during low tide: completely forgotten when the economy is doing well but a cause for alarm during an economic downturn.

Essentially, the rocks are always there and ships or companies navigating the economic waters ignore them at their peril.

Corporate governance

As part of the long-term strengthening of a company, we propose the strengthening of corporate governance.

Corporate governance is a system, a set of processes, of ensuring that a corporation is governed in a manner consistent with the principles and practices of a free and moral society and of a competitive market economy.

It assigns final authority and full responsibility to the board of directors. Collectively, the board takes responsibility for the corporation and seeks to use key principles to maximize shareholder value.

While the Corporation Code defines the overall scope of the board's role in the corporation, the board needs to define its duties more specifically, in a way that is synchronized with what it will delegate to operating management.

The threat of being held personally liable for losses from corporate fraud and other illegal acts could be worrisome to a corporation's directors. They need not worry as long as they practice good governance, translated as fairness, accountability, and transparency, in all aspects of the decision making process.

These guiding principles may be considered inappropriate for closely held corporations where, traditionally, autocratic governance systems have been successful. But even these corporations now recognize that the times call for a change in the practice of corporate governance.

One key driver of this change is the need for external funds. Any corporation which expects to remain competitive needs to have access to debt and equity. In raising equity, the corporation will have to meet listing and registration requirements which place a premium on proper corporate governance practices.

In contracting debt, the corporation is faced with new and modern risk management systems of banks which also put a premium on corporate governance reforms.

But the more important driver of change with a long-term implication is the impact on society, starting with employees, customers and suppliers. Safeguarding the company's reputation not only translates into higher earnings for the corporate dollar but also builds intangible assets like a highly motivated workforce, trustworthy suppliers, a loyal customer base and, most important, a reputation for fair trading.

What other firms are doing

Consider the risks to an organization when its representative makes a decision or engages in an activity which adversely affects it or the market as a whole (e.g., activities that dent consumer or market confidence). Think also of the risks arising from decisions that are illegal or inconsistent with the organization's values and stakeholder expectations.

Can these risks be addressed by traditional process controls such as system security, patents, no-go areas, insurance, spot checks, regular monitoring and reporting? In the 1990s, there was an explosion of programs that focused on good behavior in both public and private sector institutions.

Most of these activities are called either compliance programs or ethics programs. Are these programs the answer to this potential threat?

Compliance programs generally deal with adherence to laws, regulations, policies and procedures and are generally corrective in nature. Ethics programs, on the other hand, include not only compliance issues, but also focus on ethical reasoning and analysis; they are preventive in nature.

The term business ethics refers

BUSINESS/ C4

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Will China . . .

(From page C1)

in 1997, perhaps 5.4 million in 1998.

Threat to others

Of course, few would welcome a rapid inflation rate. But deflation is damaging in its own way, for it depresses workers' wages, squeezes corporate profits, and deadens the appetite to invest.

It seems that China may become the cause of long-term deflation. Entry into the WTO will open its economy to more foreign competition. That will force unviable firms to shed their fat. Unemployment will rise, and that will prolong deflation.

"More trade interaction with China will put pressure around the region, especially for countries that compete on price rather than technology," says Graham Parry, economist of Lehman Brothers, Tokyo. "Because of it, Asia will remain a source of deflation for the rest of the world."

World deflation can worsen with the entry of China into the World Trade Organization. Expect more conflicts over exchange rates and charges of dumping.

In fact, many economists are calling for China to hike her currency (appreciate, the opposite of depreciate), so as to make her exports more expensive.

Japan has actually asked China to appreciate the yuan. Not doing so "poses a threat to the economies of Japan and other Southeast Asian countries. *(Comments to dmarroyo@hotmail.com)*

As in baseball . . .

(From page C1)

parcels and freight but business from this sector has been affected by the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

"So what we did was to grow a different part of the business to compensate for the decline in another," he says.

Romero-Salas developed his management style through his stints here and abroad.

A Bachelor of Science degree in Industrial Management Engineering from De La Salle University, he began his career as finance manager for Solid Shipping Lines Corp., a local inter-island shipping firm in 1980.

In 1990, he was appointed general manager of SGS Far East Ltd.- Philippines, the local subsidiary in Peru, S.A. from 1992 to 1996, and then moved to the Aboitiz Equity Ventures and International Container Terminal Services Inc.

Romero-Salas says getting his master's degree from the IMD of Lausanne, Switzerland where people of different nationalities come together, and working in different countries honed his skills in dealing with different kinds of people. His exposure developed his ability to change his way of thinking and management style to suit different cultures.

"Filipinos, for instance, are non-conflictive. They would not discuss their concerns openly unlike in Latin America or in Peru where people are more aggressive and they speak their mind. I had to adopt to that when I went to Peru," he says.

One thing he learned from Latin America, for instance, is that the fastest way to get on the employees' good side is to throw a party. This way people can come together and be more open and honest about their feelings.

Romero-Salas believes that Filipinos have an advantage over other nationalities when it comes to management, which explains why Filipinos excel well abroad.

He says one reason is that Filipino managers are used to steering corporations through more challenges such as frequent economic downturns.

"There are many managers from different countries who are great at building a company during times of growth, but somehow they can never do well during a downturn. They are just not used to it," he says.

Romero-Salas says one reason is that Filipinos and other managers from Asia are used to working with economies that move wildly, unlike say in Europe or in the United States where the valleys are not so deep and the peaks are not too high.

One thing in common about these countries, however, is that employees appreciate honesty and they demand it from the top management. It is one of the most effective means, he says, to keep up the morale during difficult times like these.

In TNT Philippines, Romero-Salas takes time out to hold a regular small group discussion with six of his staff, selected at random from different department, just to air out their concerns.

"We have it once a month and the only rule is that there should be no talk about salaries. We are open to suggestions. But then again, it does not stop them from still bringing it up," Romero-Salas says.

While sales are down, businesses may have to shell out more for insurance in 2002

REYNALDO A. DE DIOS
Risk & Insurance Management Consultant

BEGINNING Jan. 1, 2002 the costs of non-life insurance will rise significantly for business.

Specifically, high valued industrial/manufacturing plants, high-rise commercial buildings and condominiums, shopping malls and commercial aircraft will be affected.

In fact, Philippine insurance companies have received signals from international reinsurers and reinsurance brokers that rates for reinsurance protection covering their excess risks will be revised upwards coupled with amended terms and conditions such as limitations on losses due to war, terrorism and sabotage including natural perils such as earthquake, typhoon and flood.

In addition, there is the possibility that a co-insurance or risk-sharing provision on losses will constitute part of the new reinsurance terms.

Also, coverage against terrorism and sabotage are to be excluded.

Fortunately, insurance of motor vehicles and personal lines like fire, insurance of residences, accident and health will be spared as a majority of these insurance are retained by the domestic insurance market.

For the past several years business insurance costs have been kept at considerably low levels because of intense competition in the domestic front supported by an over capacity of reinsurance players who also compete vigorously among themselves.

On Sept. 12, 2001, the world of reinsurance changed completely as a result of the unprecedented and unimaginable losses caused by the suicidal crashes of two commercial aircraft on the World Trade Center in New York City which destroyed the twin towers of the WTC as well as numerous buildings in the surrounding area.

Two other hijacked planes crashed, one against the Pentagon of Washington, D.C., and the other in Pennsylvania State.

Soon thereafter, aviation reinsurers gave a seven-day notice of cancellation to all insurers for risks of war, hijacking and sabotage.

These tragic incidents immediately affected the different classes of insurance policies purchased by corporations and individuals and these include property damage, business interruption, workmen's compensation, personal and travel accident, life, motor and others.

As of Nov. 4, 2001, the exposure of insurance and reinsurance companies, both US and international, is estimated to exceed $21.7 billions, and this is not yet complete as losses are still in process of tabulation and verification.

As a consequence, the global reinsurance capacity will be greatly reduced while underwriters (the professionals that determine the acceptance of risks) will become more stringent and extra careful in their risk assessments subject to limited authority on certain types of risks.

This will have a domino effect on domestic insurance markets worldwide but, as mentioned, only the high-valued commercial/industrial risks will be gravely impacted upon in terms of business insurance costs.

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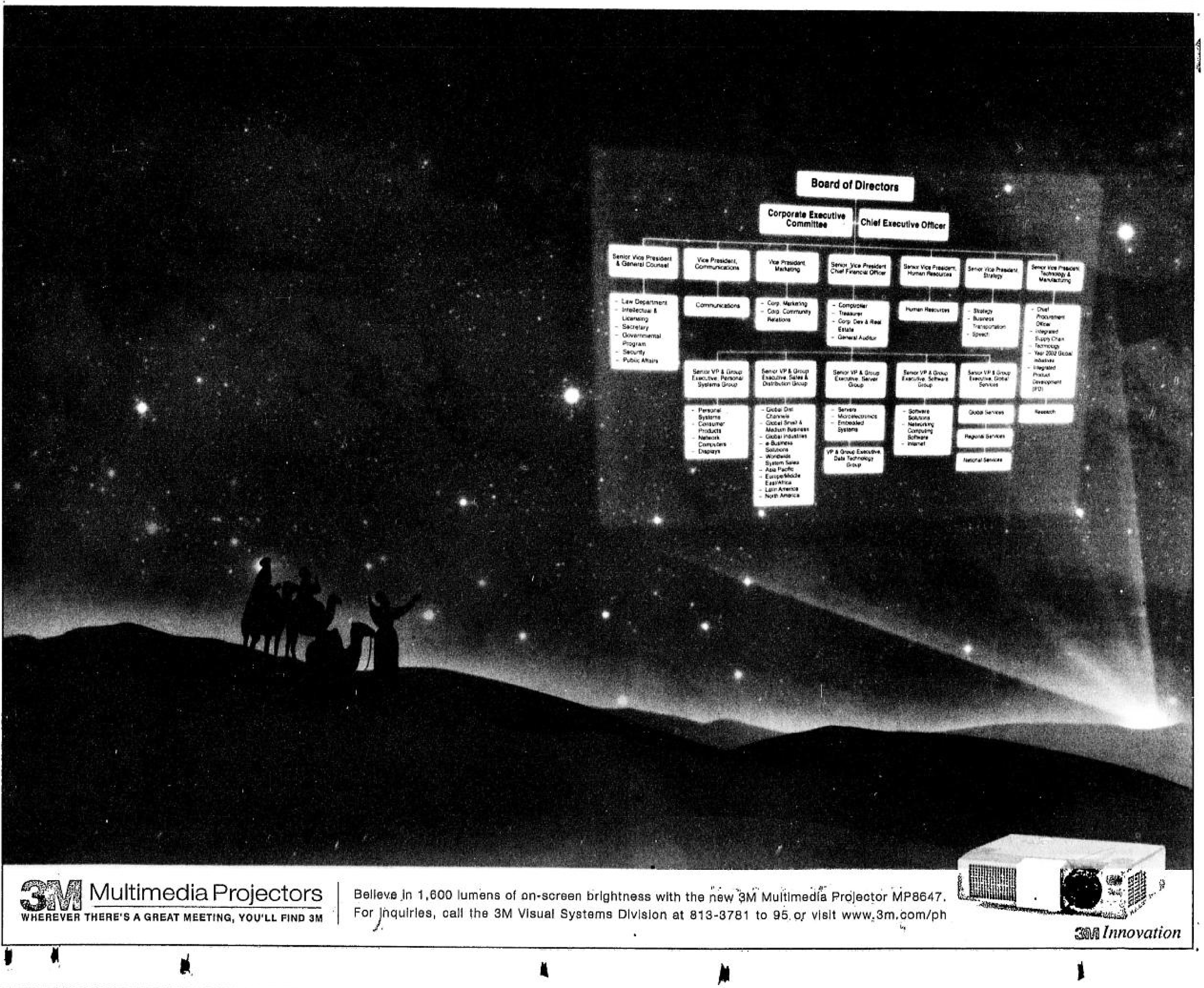
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Commit to share in the nation's burdens

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MARGARITO "Gary" Teves, president of Land Bank of the Philippines

JESUS P. Estanislao, president and CEO of Institute for Solidarity in Asia

INSTITUTE of Solidarity chair Dr. Jesus P. Estanislao stated that "the National Solidarity Covenant is an invitation to all Filipinos to make a commitment in the spirit of solidarity to share the burdens to live up to the demands of social responsibility and ethics for the general welfare of all Filipinos, especially the marginalized sector."

Estanislao spoke during the 2nd Solidarity Congress on Governance Reforms, which was co-organized by the Institute of Solidarity in Asia (ISA).

The conference saw the participation and support of the private sector, specifically business and civil society through initiatives of its own to supplement the governance program for the country.

Estanislao added that the solidarity covenant sends a clear message that the Philippines is taking good governance seriously. "We wish to signal this very clearly and strongly to all our citizens and to the rest of the world," he said.

The conference also enlisted the support of the Asia Foundation as well as the World Bank. Representatives from different nongovernment organizations (NGOs), the youth, students and the academe also attended the event.

"This conference is not a one-shot affair. There are follow-up activities to be undertaken. We are initiating a process of consultations—to take in more perspectives and suggestions on national governance, local governance, corporate governance, and on the sectors and professions which can be added into a final report called "A Governance Reform Agenda for the Philippines."

"This report will be submitted to the President in mid-January 2002," Estanislao announced.

The conference presented two panel sessions, the first of which was entitled "National Governance Reform Agenda: Focus Groups and Sectoral Initiatives and Challenges" chaired by Professor Ernesto Garilao, Associate Dean of the Center for Development Management of the Asian Institute of Management.

Joining the panel were Francis Estrada, chair and principal of Equity Managers Inc., Antoinieta F. Ibe, chairperson of the Professional Regulation Commission and Margarito Teves, president and chief executive officer of Land Bank of the Philippines.

The 2nd panel session entitled "Business at the Forefront of Good Corporate Governance" was chaired by Juan Santos, chair and CEO of Nestle Philippines. The panel was composed of Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala II, president and CEO of Ayala Corp.; Luis Lorenzo Jr., chair, Lapanday Holdings Corp.; Wilfred Steven Uytengsu, president and chief operating officer of Alaska Milk Corp., and Deborah Morris, regional vice president of Financial Lines, American International Underwriters (AIU).

ISA's campaign for good governance continues even after the conference as it makes the rounds of different regions around the country to provide institutions outside Metro Manila an opportunity to give their own perspectives and suggestions on good governance. These will be incorporated into the country's Corporate Governance Reform Agenda to be presented to the President in January 2002.

As of this writing, Estanislao has accepted to be co-chair of the panel on good governance, chaired by Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. and co-chaired by Secretary Emilia Boncodin, for the National Socioeconomic Summit which will be convened by President Macapagal-Arroyo on Dec. 10. The summit consists of 12 working panels and its purpose to create an action agenda for 2001-2003 that will ensure sustained economic growth and poverty alleviation.

The panel on good governance has invited the ISA's sectoral convertors as resource persons for a pre-summit meeting to be held this month. ISA's convenors group include Francis Estrada for national governance, George Aseniero for local governance, Dr. Cesar Saldana for corporate governance, Baltazar Endriga for the accountants and Laurice Guillen for filmmakers.

Business . . .

(From page C2)

to the standards of right and wrong that guide the behavior and the decision-making of business organizations and the individuals in these organizations.

Millions of dollars are spent annually in many countries in establishing and running corporate ethics/compliance management programs to prevent employee wrongdoing and protect companies from financial penalties.

Most of the compliance programs are reasonably effective in informing employees of the laws, regulations, etc., and in telling them about the consequences of noncompliance; and many of the ethics programs do raise "ethical awareness."

Few of either, however, are successful at weaving those ideas into the fabric of employees' daily work.

Compliance programs usually resemble law enforcement: Participants are potential "offenders" who are told by corporate law enforcement officials—lawyers, internal auditors, corporate affairs officers—what they must do and what will happen to them if they disobey. Although usually unintended, the tone is often punitive or paternalistic, neither of which makes employees feel respected and capable.

Ethics programs, on the other hand, often fall into the "Sunday school" or "sermonizing" category. Often delivered by human resources or a corporate social policy group, ethics programs frequently focus on "being a good person" and "doing the right thing" without attention to institutional realities, the effect of those realities on employee behavior, and how employees can learn to manage the realities—all of which are essential to behaving ethically.

Companies can set in place a code of conduct which employees can refer to in their daily dealings. A code of conduct will be useful as a reference point, a guide for action that can be developed and enhanced as it is tested by circumstances.

Key topics must include: compliance with the law, conflict of interest, confidential information, gifts and entertainment, accuracy and integrity of written documents, questionable payments and unfair advantage.

Other companies establish responsible business practices programs emphasizing the institution's respect for employees and their capabilities, and expectation that employees will be responsible and accountable for the actions they take. In other words, the program says they are part of the team.

The word responsible encompasses both "compliant" and "ethical," but includes much more. A program that focuses on responsible employee behavior begins with an assumption that employees want to do things within an accepted moral framework, but recognizes that they may face impediments to doing so effectively.

Until now, there has been no way to reliably measure the actual impact of ethics and compliance programs on a company's desired results. At Andersen, we have developed a sophisticated and reliable assessment tool designed to give organizations valuable, quantitative information regarding the ethical aspects of their corporate culture.

Put simply, IntraSight assessment gives you the power to measure, understand and improve your ethical culture. It also provides the opportunity to benchmark your organizational ethics. The ratings used for each cluster of responses were developed in Chicago, Illinois, after two years of extensive research and there is now a database of some 200 companies that were involved in the development of the tool. It allows organizations to understand the all-important, but elusive, employee perceptions that influence behavior.

IntraSight assessment is a unique, comprehensive, and scientifically sound proprietary assessment tool. It measures employee perceptions of both the corporate culture issues and the ethics/compliance program factors that have been proven to support, or derail, positive ethical behavior.

Andersen's ethics and responsible business practices group has assisted many corporations with their successful ethics/compliance programs. A responsible business practices program must be based on an understanding of why people do wrong things. It must include instruction for all employees—both individual contributors and those with supervisory/managerial responsibilities—on the laws and policies they must uphold; and skill building, guidance, and resources to address the causes of wrongdoing. The company must also provide mechanisms to give employees the support and guidance they need, and to enable them to ask for help without feeling foolish or incompetent.

With this program in place, the company is better able to prevent, deter and detect fraud. Its board of directors can then focus its attention on building long-term shareholder value.

(This article reflects the personal opinion of the authors. Medel T. Nera is a member of the Management Association of the Philippines and partner of SyCip Gorres Velayo and Co. Nera heads the risk consulting group of SGV. Leonardo J. Matignas Jr., leads SGV/Andersen's business fraud and investigation services practice in the Philippines, and is a certified fraud examiner and the vice president of the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners—Philippine chapter. The MAP secretariat and the authors may be reached via mapsec@globe.com.ph)

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Try this do-it-yourself market research

By Celia R. Pascual
UP Issi

GOING INTO BUSINESS

MARKETING means different things to different people. Simply, it refers to all business activities necessary for goods to change hands—from manufacturer to wholesaler to retailer to final user.

Noted marketing guru Philip Kotler defines it as "... a social and managerial process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating and exchanging products and value with others." However you define it, the primary aim of marketing remains one and inviolate: customer satisfaction.

Customer satisfaction means providing customers with the right product or service at the right price, at the right place, at the right time. Easier said than done, of course. It will certainly take time to get everything right when you are just starting. But you would have started in the right direction if you began your marketing activity with a simple marketing research.

Marketing research is discovering how to identify and meet customer needs. It will help the entrepreneur make informed decisions rather than go on an adventure of hits and misses.

As a small businessman, you might think that market research will set you back financially. You might dismiss it as a highfalutin procedure that only big businesses can afford. Think of it this way: it is likely to cost you more if you did not study your market before attempting to sell to it. And it need not burn a hole in your pocket if you do it yourself.

With a do-it-yourself approach, you can find better solutions to your marketing problems and make fewer mistakes in judgment even with little or no knowledge of modern research methods.

Market research need not be elaborate or sophisticated. The key word is system. You need to have a system in finding answers to such questions as: How big is my market? Who should I target? What marketing trends and movements will affect me? How effective is my promotion and advertising? How do I stand compared with my competitors? And so on.

Here's a list of guide questions that you can use:

Questions to ask on the product

Who buys the product or service?

How much is the buyer willing to spend for the product or service?

What are the main uses of the product or service?

What makes the product different from others in the market?

How often do customers buy the product?

Do the competitors offer a wide range of products?

What technology is involved in making the product?

Is the technology changing?

Are sales seasonal, cyclical or trend oriented?

Is the product price sensitive?

How was the price set?

Questions to ask on the market

What is the size of the market for the product or service?

What are the characteristics of the customers (young, adult, aging, men, women, etc)

Is there a distinguishable niche of this market into which the product will fit?

What are the characteristics of the market niche?

What are the current trends in the market, and how will they affect the market penetration?

What is the rate of growth in this market?

Can the market increase by increasing the uses for the product?

What are the distribution methods used?

Are there other distribution methods that can be used?

Questions to ask on the competition

Who are the competitors and where are they located?

What are the strengths and weaknesses of these competitors?

How long have these competitors been in business?

How easy is it for a new competitor to enter the market?

In what form does competition exist in the market?

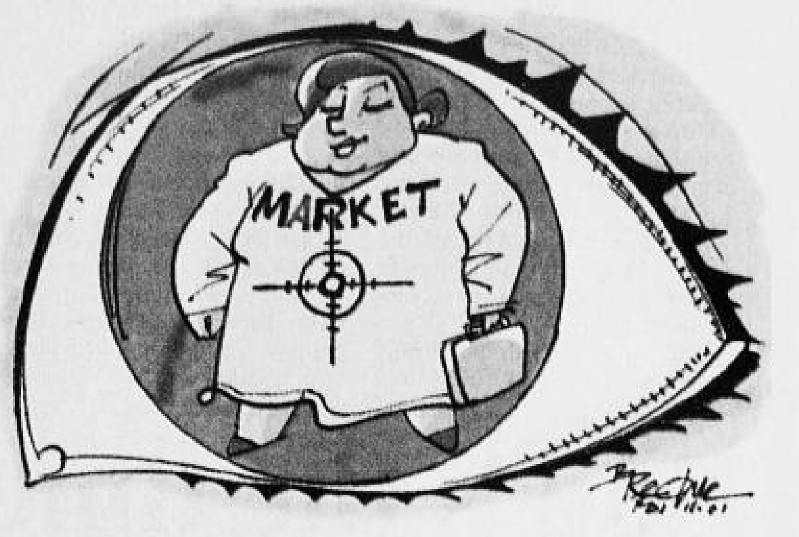
How do the competitors promote their products?

What channels of distribution are they using?

How effective are these channels of distribution to these competitors?

Once these types of information have been identified, the sources of these information will have to be selected. Sources of information fall into three categories. These are:

1. Primary sources
2. Secondary sources
3. Experts' opinion



Primary sources

Gathering information from primary sources is more time consuming than the other two sources since it involves surveys and interviews. Information gathered in this manner, however, is very relevant since questions asked could be applicable to the specific situation. Primary sources include:

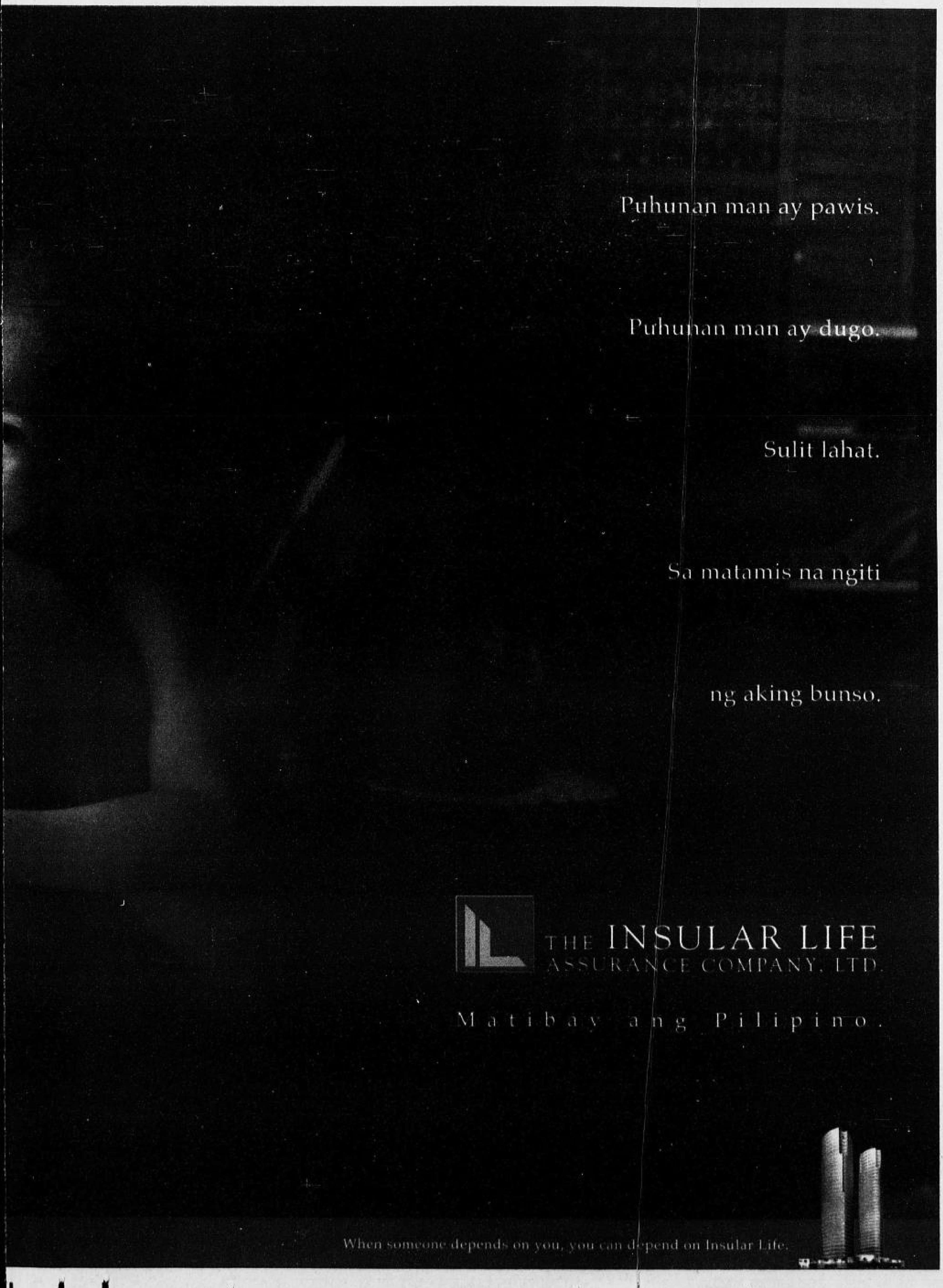
1. Direct observation
2. Surveys (mail or telephone)
3. Small group discussions
4. Sales or taste tests
5. Personal interviews (of customers, suppliers, competitors, etc.)

Secondary sources

Information that have been previously gathered by others and made available in printed forms are referred to as secondary information. Some of these information may be out-of-date. Some may not exactly be useful for a particular situation since it does not cover exactly what is needed. Secondary sources, however, can be used to decide if there is a need to collect information from other sources or to get an overall picture of the market. The National Statistics Office usually publishes statistics useful for SMEs. So does the Bureau of Export and Trade Promotion of the Department of Trade and Industry, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, and other government agencies.

Experts' opinion

The final source of research are the experts. An expert would often have access to information and general observations on the trends in the market that would be difficult to obtain from other sources. Though experts may differ in their opinions, it rests on the user of information to assess which opinion has more weight. Experts would include industry practitioners, bankers, officers and members of industry chambers and trade associations, etc.



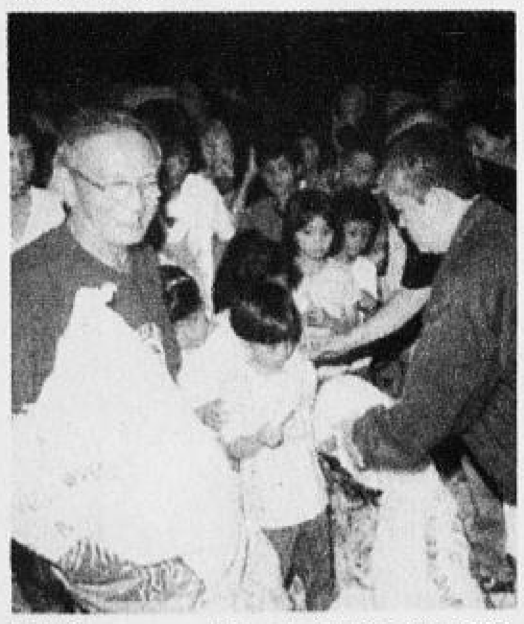
BSP staff bring early holiday cheer to provinces

EMPLOYEES of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas recently brought gifts of toys and early holiday cheer to poor children of Kalibo, Aklan and Bacacay, Albay.

This annual treat for the children is part of the commitment of the BSP governor and the BSP employees to the "Alay sa Batang Pinoy Give a Gift" project of GMA-7 Foundation with the assistance of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

The BSP team in Aklan included Rogelio V. Garcia and Ben L. Pumaren (public information, relations and special events office); Julie Hicban and Myrna Antiola (human resource management department) and Rene Katipunan, Leonora Templonuevo, Grace Encartado, Helen Flores, Lucylyn Trieste, Lucelyn Calizo, Porfirio Solleza, Norberto de Leon, Ullyses Miaral and Elizerio Desales, Freddie Nolada, Angel Venturanza and Nanette Inocencio (BSP Kalibo branch).

The BSP team in Albay were Reuben C. Abis (public information, relations and special events office); Ada Marie Cruz, Raymond Denoga (human resource management department) and Federico Rentoria, Rose Cano, Marlyn Paje, Mario Mallari, Romanico Salting and Juan Balgemino (BSP Legaspi branch).



BEN Pumaren and Regelio Garcia of the BSP-public relations, information and special events office help distribute gifts.

DISTRIBUTING gifts were Bicol AFP-civil relations staff Major Brozo, Reuben Abis of BSP-Pirseo and Federico Rentoria of the BSP-Legaspi branch.

Are local pros ready to meet foreign competition?

DR. TERESO Tullao, professor at the College of Business and Economics at De La Salle University-Manila, pointed out the need to prepare and continuously hone Filipino professionals along the demands and challenges of the times to be able to compete well in the international services arena.

In his paper with the Philippine Apec Study Center Network (PASCN), whose lead convenor is the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS), Tullao said that only a continuing upgrade of the country's overall human resource development program can address this.

Tullao pointed out the poor quality of higher education institutions in the Philippines as gleaned from the low performance of graduates in national licensure examinations, limited number of schools with accredited programs, very few institutions cited as centers of excellence, and the inclusion of only four Philippine universities among the top universities in Asia.

In terms of faculty, he noted that several studies have indicated the relative academic inadequacy of teachers, with just a little over 7 percent of them holding doctorate degrees and 25 percent holding master's degrees.

In the field of research, many of the teachers do not have the necessary qualifications to conduct independent studies. As a consequence, there is hardly any research activity going on in Philippine colleges and universities. "Because of their heavy teaching load, too, teachers can hardly do anything beyond academic instruction," Tullao added.

To address these concerns, Tullao suggested that curricular programs of various professions must be updated regularly to keep up with the changes in the market and technology. He also noted the need to benchmark those programs with some of the best academic programs in the region.

"Seminar programs must be de-emphasized. Instead, professionals should be encouraged to do publications, inventions and graduate education," he emphasized.

To further improve continuing professional education, Tullao said that professional organizations must be given more flexibility in developing their members through the institution of a professional ranking system.

Likewise, he recommended that government should rationalize the allocation of funds to higher education through a moratorium on the establishment of state universities and colleges.

Now's the time to go into change management

BUSINESS landscapes are changing faster than ever, presenting innumerable opportunities that can be potentially tapped.

So why is it that most companies announce their new initiatives with great fanfare, only to find organizational fatigue at its very first stage of implementation? Is there an underlying reason for this predicament, and if yes, then how can we prepare organizations to get around it.

To start with, not knowing what to change can be as fatal as knowing what to change and doing nothing about it. Hence, having realized the need to change is the first step. The following are some of the functional areas that need to be kept in mind as we manage change within organizations.

Manage people. The key to organizational success lies in motivating people to contribute more than you expect from them.

It also requires realignment, as those flashy strategies and plans mean very little unless people at all levels in the organization buy into the idea and commit to contribute toward its success.

Organizations have to do more than just pay lip service to their commitment to people.

Areas that need particular attention are skills transfer, performance management, career path, accountability and communication.

Changing the culture and behavior of people is an extremely daunting task, but is certainly more rewarding in the long run.

Manage change dependencies. Organizations need to remember that changes happening in one part of the organization, more often than not, affect the entire company.

For example improving customer service through changes in the front office usually depend upon the processing capabilities of the back office.

It is, hence, important to holistically understand the desired change intention and translate this into collective ownership along different points on the value chain.

Use technology intelligently. Harness technology not because it is the latest in town, but to actually deliver tangible benefits based on the specific needs of your company.

Get people's buy in, do continual skills orientation, manage risks and be flexible to the needs of internal and external customers.

Provide effective Leadership. Be prepared to get your hands dirty to dig out issues at the frontlines.

Mobilize the entire organization by communicating the urgency to change and making employees passionately believe in that cause.

Instill a sense of pride in people that collectively snowballs into organizational performance.

Manage systems and processes. Promote transparent processes that elicit accountability and add to improved customer responsiveness by threshing out process inefficiencies.

Provide systems that gauge organizational performance through appropriate roll down into individual measures.

Develop an obsession for customer needs and expectations. Prepare a knowledge organization that is sensitive enough to discern changing consumer patterns through effective market intelligence at the frontlines, which is subsequently shared throughout the company.

Continuous improvement. There is nothing like a perfect game plan for organizational revitalization, at best, it is a process in evolution. A culture of continual improvement is the only way an organization can prevent itself from disappearing into oblivion.

What could be the benefits? Change is inevitable. Managing it to your advantage by minimizing organizational resistance to it seems to be the only way forward.

This vital enterprise-wide acceptance is key to minimizing time and cost overruns by early anticipation of problems and costly reworks.

Change management acts as a catalyst that ensures promised benefits are actually delivered and the company leverages from anticipated benefits.

Finally, nothing is more important to business than making money, and organizations that are ready to invest resources toward managing change in a way that best optimizes the potential of the organization will find themselves better prepared to take advantage of market opportunities arising in the future. *(By Aditya Vir, operations manager,© S&G International Consulting. S&G International Consulting Inc. is an international management consultancy firm based in the Philippines and Asia. For further details, call 849-3989 or email consulting@sg-change.com.)*

Citibank Greenhills moves to Missouri Street

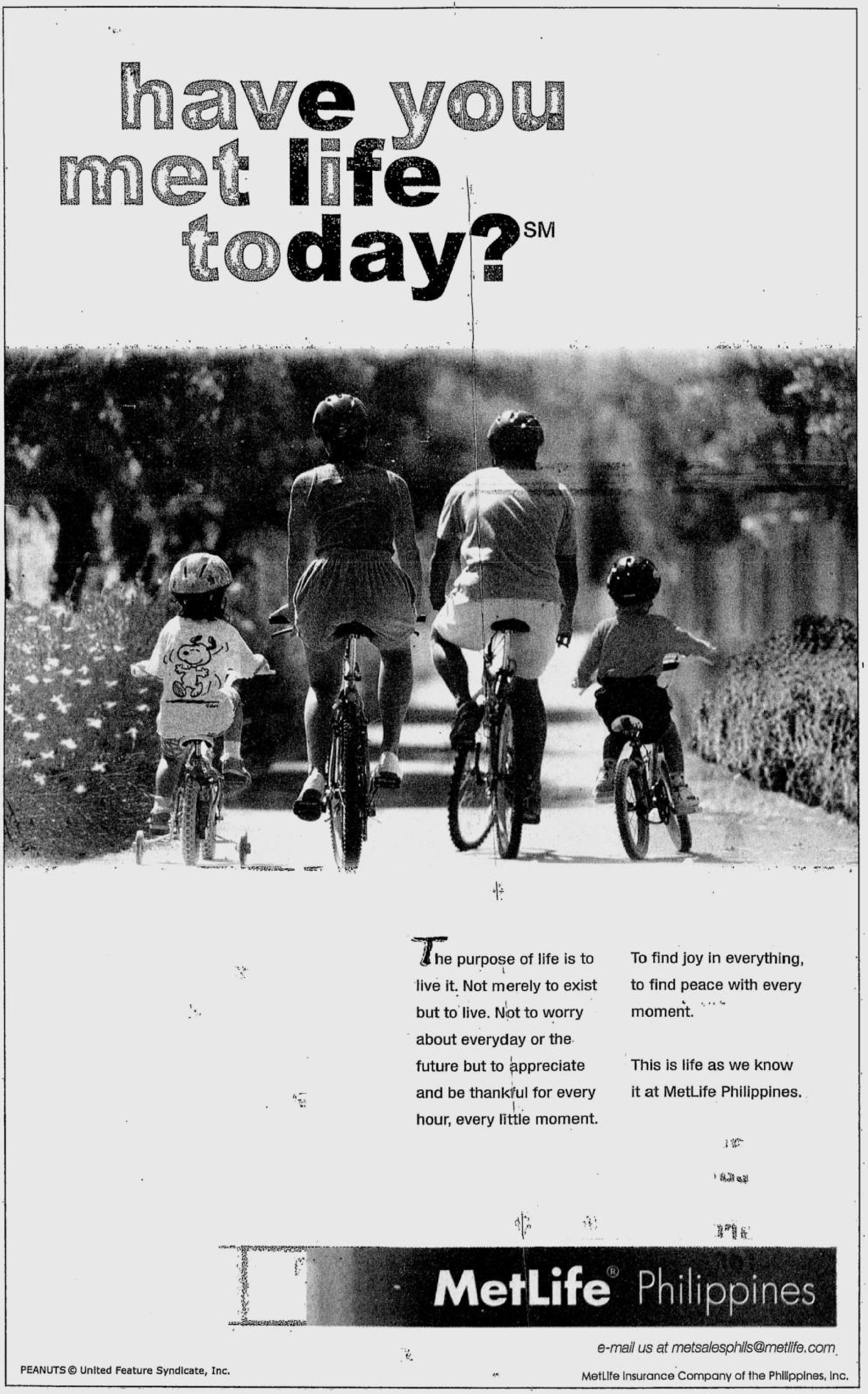
CITIBANK recently reopened its Greenhills branch in a new location along Missouri Street across the Greenhills Shopping Center.

Offering world-class banking amenities and more parking convenience with its ample basement parking facilities, the new Citibank Greenhills branch will serve the bank's many valued and longtime clients in the area.

Vice president and branch manager Dindin Nakpil said the new site was built according to Citibank's global standards for branch offices. Citibank clients can wait in a lounge area while their transactions are being processed and catch up on the latest news while watching television or browsing through a wide selection of current magazines.

CitiGold clients can also look forward to private and personalized banking in well-appointed surroundings at the branch's 2nd floor. A full-service branch, Citibank Greenhills will welcome new deposits and bill payment transactions among others.

To celebrate its opening, new clients who open a Citibank relationship can bring home a Rustan's gift certificate for P1,000, a Nokia 3330, a Nokia 8250 or an LG Collins personal refrigerator. (For Inquiries, you may call 705-5800.)



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It's business as usual, despite ₱12 billion in debts

(From page C8)

MPC shares were among the most actively traded in the stock market, closing higher at 41 centavos after opening at 34 centavos. This was after MPC made a strong assurance that it had P9 billion worth of immediate sources of liquidity to service obligations and that half of its third-party debts would be retired by the first quarter of next year.

The announcement was a welcome relief for MPC, since this effectively refuted talks in the market that the company might default on its loans. Otherwise, it would have been an even bigger concern than the issue of Ramcar's debt woes.

MPC itself has around P12 billion in debts, including the P7 billion owed to creditor-banks and the P5 billion owed to parent company First Pacific, which provided a bridge financing to help refinance the debts of BLC early this year.

Including the debts of its subsidiaries, however, the MPC group's debts stand at around P17.8 billion. On top of the P12 billion owed by MPC itself, BLC has debts of P2.8 billion and Fort Bonifacio Development Corp., BLC's joint venture with state-controlled Bases Conversion Development Authority, owes some P2.5 billion.

But as BLC's debts have been restructured and FBDC has recurring income to handle its own debt, MPC's most immediate focus is on the P7 billion third-party debt, although he assures that obligations to First Pacific won't be taken for granted.

"I don't think any of our debts will be problematic. We would be able to address this. In fact, we're hoping to address half of that (P7 billion) within the first quarter next year and we have enough liquid assets to keep without debt service and give us time to address the larger chunks of debt that will be taken out of the balance sheet," MPC chief finance officer Jose Ma. Lim says.

For the first nine months of this year, MPC incurred a net loss of P2.2 billion, as a small operating profit of P300 million was overwhelmed by P1.6 billion worth of financing charges plus some accounting adjustments. Last year, the company had a profit of P2.7 billion, although such included a one-time gain from the sale of its stake in affiliate Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. to parent firm First Pacific.

The higher cost of debt servicing expense was due to the conversion of debts into non-convertible loans which carry higher financing.

"On top of that, our prime debts have increased by about P2 billion between that period and now so our focus going forward is to address the level of debt service and we have very specific efforts and initiatives that are in place," Lim notes.

The P9 billion worth of immediate sources of liquidity, Lim explains, would include receivables from Pacific Plaza Towers, some P3 billion worth of land receivables (including a P2.5-billion deal to sell a 2.7-hectare lot to a consortium led by Charlie Rufino) and a number of leases.

"The leases are expected to generate between P200 million to P300 million between a two- to three-year period as soon as all the structures are up. At the moment, these leases are worth something between P60-P100 million," Lim estimates.

"Maybe it's enough, maybe it's not enough. It depends on how the creditors will respond," Pangilinan notes.

Debt restructuring, he stresses, is on the back burner in terms of priority in favor of debt reduction.

"What needs to be done is to reduce our debt as quickly as we can so that we can reduce interest expense at the MPC level as well so that the operating profit line will not be overwhelmed by interest charge. It's got to be not only extending the terms but actual reduction because if you extend, the interest charge is expanded as well," he explains.

Retailers

"We are building a growing source of recurring income at the operating company and we are in fact very optimistic about closing more sales. The disposition process of BLC has temporarily held off sales but we are sure that there's strong interest because of the increased activity within the area. There's a critical mass that's forming. We have P300 million lease income on an annual basis, which can further grow," Lim says.

FBDC SVP for commercial operations Vicente Tinsay III says among the new retail ventures that will rise in the Global City to join the popular S&R Price Club are the following:

- MC Home Builders Depot, a one-stop warehouse plaza for building construction materials and home furnishings, which signed a 21-year lease for a 26,000-square-meter area beside S&R;
- CATS Motors, the foremost dealer and service center of Mercedes Benz in the country, which is expected to sign a 16-year lease contract by December and whose construction will start in the second quarter of next year;
- Additional restaurants like The Butcher and the Grill, Next Door Café, Tamasha (Indian restaurant), Gordo's Italian Deli and Claudette's Bakeshop.

Pier One, a popular dining and entertainment establishment, has also opened for business last September at the Fort Square, the expanded retail and entertainment district of the Global City.

On the other hand, he said Bonifacio StopOver commenced operations last October with anchor tenants Shell, Jollibee and Starbucks, together with other retailers. This Stopover, located at the foot of the Kalayaan bridge, will be expanded to accommodate an additional 4,000 square meters of space for more food and retail outlets.

Institutional and office activities

Tinsay also bared that St. Luke's Medical Center signed a 50-year lease agreement with FBDC to locate a new 500-room hospital at the Global City. St. Luke's, which caters to the high-end market, operates a hospital and a medical school in E. Rodriguez, Quezon City.

Educational institutions are likewise rising at the Global City.

"The British School of Manila, in the City's University Parkway, opened in September for the school year 2001-2002, accommodating an initial number of 400 students expected to increase to 700 in the next two years," Tinsay said.

BSM is the second international school to operate in the Global City following the Manila Japanese School with 300 students starting last May.

Two others are being constructed. International School Manila is expected to start operations by September next year while Victory Christian Leadership broke ground in a one-hectare area.

On the office side, HatchAsia Global City Center at e-Square IT Park was completed in September and is now 80-percent leased out, he says, while Net One Center is likewise ready for tenant fit-out.

The anchor tenants of HatchAsia include Hatchasia.com, NEC Telecoms, Cypress Semiconductors, e-PLDT and Teletech's venture for a call center, a Pilates gym, among others. The locators are expected to employ an initial number of 500 office workers.

Where to, MPC?

"MPC will still be a real estate company assuming that BLC is not sold," Pangilinan says. "It is also one scenario where MPC can retain some of the properties of Bonifacio and of course Land Co. Pacific Corp."

But the disposition of assets continues for MPC. Aside from its stake in BLC, 1st e-Bank is also up for grabs. Shipping firm Negros Navigation Co. will remain in the books as creditors did not approve a proposal from MPC to issue its shares in Nenaco as dividends to shareholders.

Talks on the sale of MPC's stake in BLC is expected to continue during the next two to three weeks. The saga doesn't end there, however. MPC president Ricardo Pascua is also structuring a management buy-out of MPC and if he is able to package a good deal, the bidding for MPC's controlling stake in BLC might no longer be necessary.

To ensure fairness in the treatment of all offers, MPC has approved Pascua's request to go on leave on absence to disinterest him from the ongoing bidding process for BLC.

So what will happen to MPC?

"It depends on what's left of its assets. Surely, we'd like to see it move on," Pangilinan, noting that these fund-raising initiatives would continue until such that that MPC is comfortable with its debt level.

Asked whether he regrets MPC's decision to venture into the Fort Bonifacio project way back in 1995 when the property market was at its peak, Pangilinan says: "You never look back."

PANGILINAN: You never look back.

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BUSINESS*Monday*

It's business as usual, despite ₱12 billion in debts

By Doris C. Dumlao

DEBT burden may be the single biggest factor prompting property developer Metro Pacific Corp. to bid out its flagship Fort Bonifacio Global City project, but the company doesn't pin all its hopes on clinching a reasonable deal as the only way to ease its woes.

"The Global City is not standing still and gathering moss," First Pacific Co. Ltd. executive chair Manuel V. Pangilinan says, noting that for MPC, it is business as usual at its 150-hectare project in Fort Bonifacio.

He says that keeping MPC's controlling stake in Bonifacio Land Corp. or at least some of its assets is still a possibility. There are many reasons why MPC can't rely on this option, of course, foremost of which is that the worst time to sell is when the buyers know you need the money most.

Pangilinan's message is that MPC will pursue its debt-reduction program with or without a buyer for its stake in the Global City.

On Thursday, the last trading day last week before the long weekend.

IT'S/ C7

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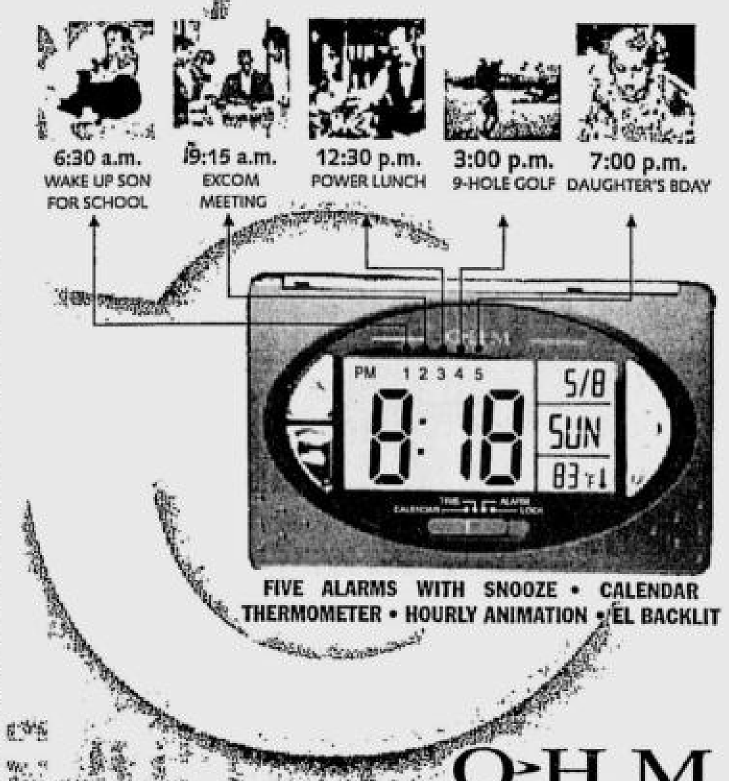

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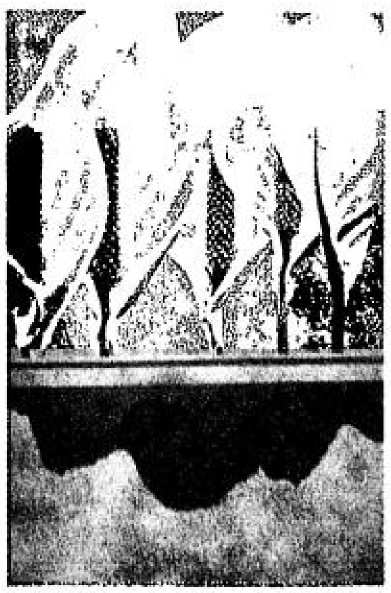

"A-XIX"

Zobel's Iris prints at ArtSpace, Glorietta

ZOBEL and Zen," a collection of 23 Iris prints of art photographer Jaime Zobel de Ayala will be on display Dec. 6-30 at the ArtSpace in Glorietta 4, Ayala Center.

The exhibit is Zobel's second collection of photographs to make use of Iris printing, a new technology in digital imaging now used as a viable fine arts medium. Zobel, an award-winning art photographer for the past 30 years, started his explorations in Iris printing in 1999. His first exhibit of Iris prints, "Passages," received inter-

ZOBEL'S/ p.D2

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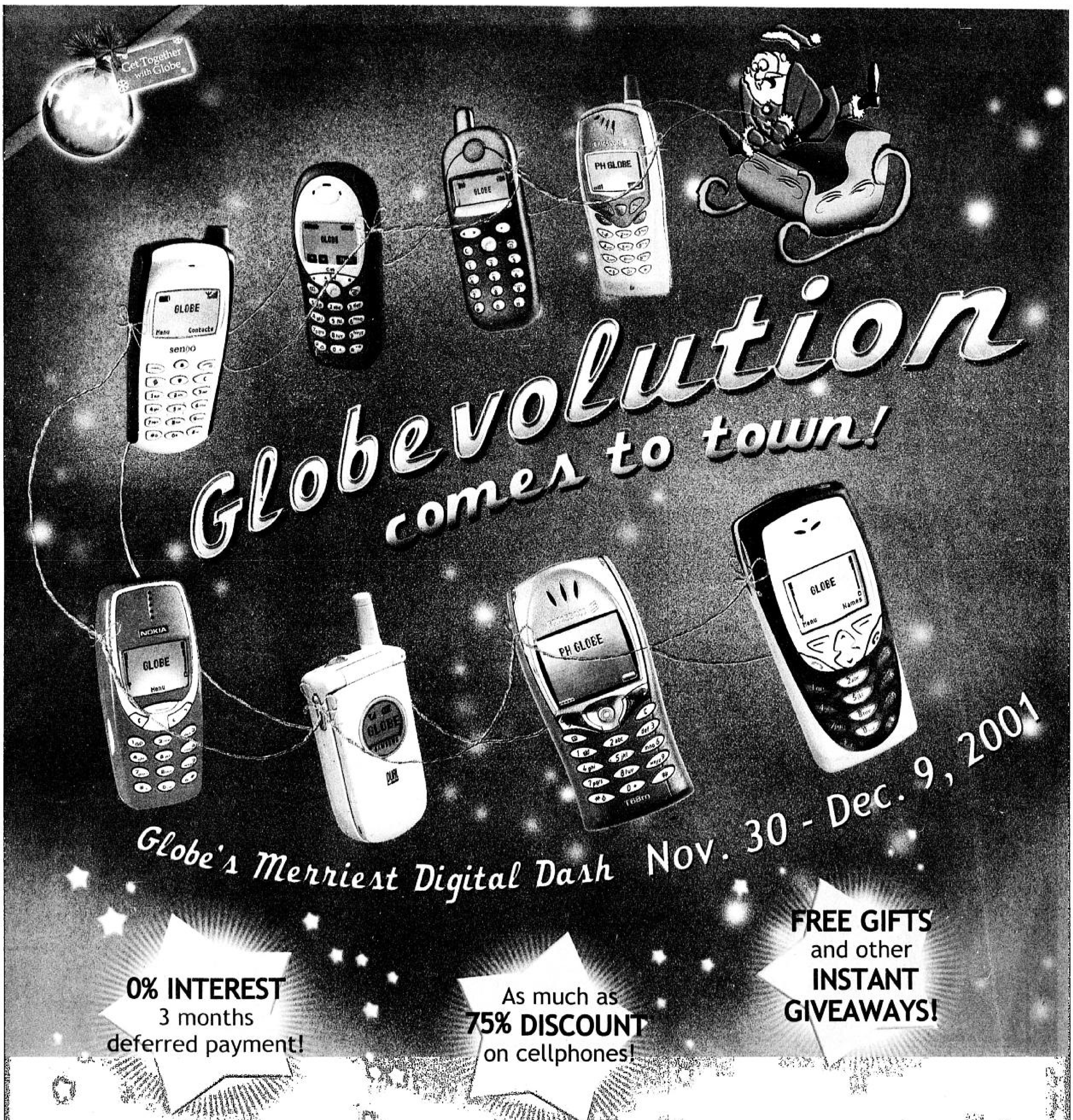
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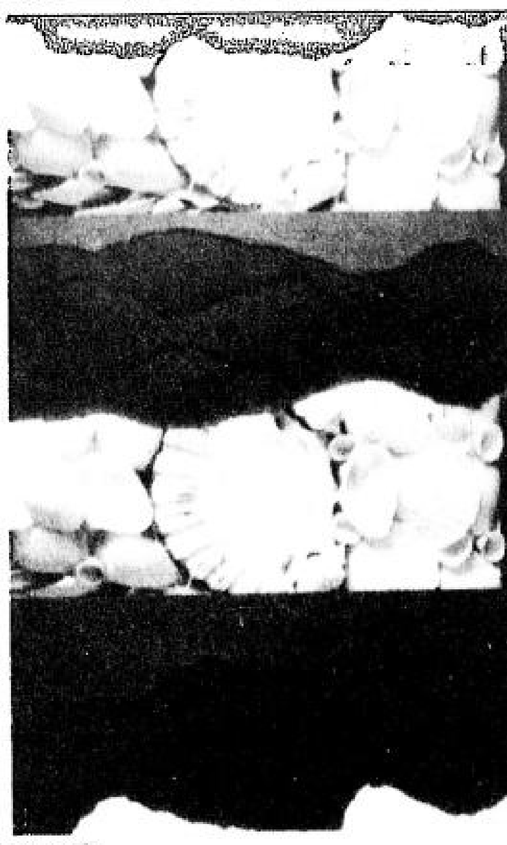

"A-XV"

Zobel's Iris prints at ArtSpace, Glorietta

(From page D1)

national acclaim in Hong Kong and Valencia, Spain.

"Zobel and Zen" captures the simplicity of objects in nature but at the same time manifests the elegance and sophistication associated with Zobel's photographs. The exhibit reveals a transformation in the artist's use of color in creating mood and emotion. From the vibrant explosion of flowers in "Passages," Zobel focuses on the subdued browns and grays of stones and seashells, giving the photographs in this coming exhibit a meditative if not transcendent spirit.

The photographs in "Zobel and Zen" are replicated in five limited edition Iris prints, each of exquisite image quality with the look and feel of an original watercolor.

Call Maureen Barreiro at 892-1801 or e-mail the Filipinas Heritage Library at events@filib.org.ph.

GLENN Escandor, owner of Royal Mandaya Hotel, and sponsors Rochelle del Rosario, Loleng Torres, Evelyn Abellera, Sonia Garcia, Emilio Escandor and Malang

PAL... SA Tabak
THE ROYAL MANDAYA HOTEL

TV interview

Malang show a hit in Davao

"MALANG in Davao" at the Royal Mandaya Hotel was a "sellout."

The artist's longtime friend Ophie Mañalac Dee was amazed with Davao's reception to the artist, who was treated like a celebrity wherever he went.

It may be because Malang continues to hold art lovers breathless with his trademark celebratory colors, enough to light up a room. "You would want to keep them for yourself," says Dee, who noted that even local tourists were quick to the draw of the nearly 30 pieces Malang brought to Davao. "I shouldn't be impressed anymore because we've known each other for so long, but I was still impressed... He always outdoes himself in every show."

"Malang in Davao" was curated by Dee of Gallery 828 with Glenn and Micmic Escandor of the Royal Mandaya Hotel of Davao.

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November 30 (5 to 6 pm, Grand Atrium, Level 1), and December 7 (7 to 8 pm, Grand Atrium, Level 1)

A KING'S BIRTH
A live Belen presentation by Trumpets with the Mandaluyong Children's Chorus.
December 1, 2, 8, 9, 15, 16, 22, 29, 30, and January 5 and 6, 2002 (all at 6 to 7 pm, Grand Atrium, Level 1)

PAGTATANGHAL PARA SA HARI
Students from the Philippine High School for the Arts perform Christmas Songs and instrumental numbers.
December 8 (4 to 5 pm, Grand Atrium, Level 1)

A ROYAL SERENADE
Carols by the Philippine Opera Company.
December 14 and 21 (both at 5 to 6 pm, Grand Atrium, Level 1)

A KING'S NIGHT
A concert with Robert Seña, Ugoy-Ugoy Band and Gigi Valmores.
December 14 (7:30 to 9 pm, Grand Atrium, Level 1)

ONCE UPON A ROYAL BIRTH
Storytelling and coloring contest, brought to you by Big & Small Co., Sacred Heart School, and Alitaptap Storytellers Club.
December 15 and 22 (both at 10 am to 12 nn, Grand Atrium, Level 1)

SIMBANG GABI
December 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21 and 22 (8 to 9 pm, Level 3), and December 23 (9 to 10 pm, Level 3)

A GIFT OF CHRISTMAS
Performed by the Effie Nañas School of Classical Ballet.
December 16 (4 to 6 pm, Grand Atrium, Level 1)

A ROYAL HYMN
Carols by the Dynamic Youth Chorale.
December 19 (5 to 6 pm, Level 3), and December 28 (5 to 6 pm, Grand Atrium, Level 1)

SINILANG NA!: A CHRISTMAS CONCERT
Performed by the Makiling Ensemble.
December 19 (6 to 7 pm, Grand Atrium, Level 1)

TRIBUTE TO THE KING
Nolyn Cabahug sings with a 35-piece orchestra and the Chiang Kai Shek Children's Choir.
December 23 (7 to 8 pm, Grand Atrium, Level 1)

HOLIDAY RHYTHMS
Musical prelude to the New Year by Jovianney Emmanuel Cruz and friends.
December 29 (4 to 5 pm, Grand Atrium, Level 1)

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December 24 - 10 am to 8 pm
December 25 - mall is closed
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January 1, 2002 - mall is closed

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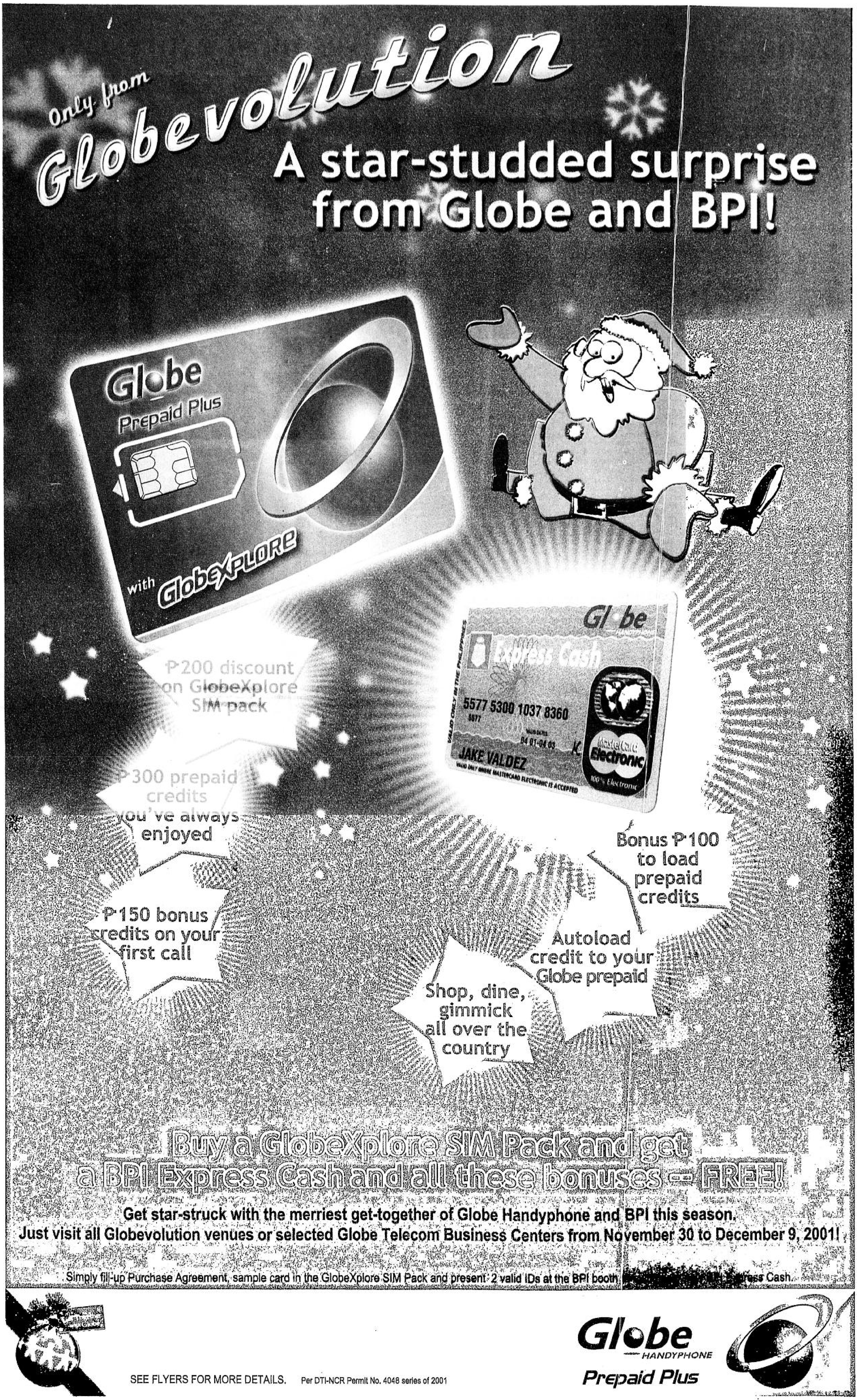
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Young artists express themselves most expressively

By Constantino C. Tejero

WHEN you're born an artist, you may go out into the world and get waylaid by other occupations and preoccupations, but more often than not you return to your art. Because you find that, in a world of make-believe, art is the only way through which you can express yourself most honestly, fearlessly, strongly, significantly.

A group of friends from the University of Santo Tomas College of Architecture and Fine Arts gather together time and again even after they've gone into different professions after college, to put up an exhibit of their recent artworks.

"Dogmanstar," ongoing until today (Dec. 3) at The Big & Small Art Co., 4/F SM Megamall A, is their second group show. It came only a few months after their debut, "For the Love of...," held at The Enterprise in Makati City last June.

Pedro Garcia, 22, is the only one in the group who has decided to become a full-time painter. He majored in painting, and was a third-place winner in the Art Association of the Philippines competition, oil/representational category.

His five oil-on-canvas pieces in the exhibit are paired with their studies in charcoal. Though somber in color, they have a softness of tone, a languidness in the poses of the figures. These could have been illustrations for romance novels, possessing as they do a rarefied air evocative of Debussy's music, the haut monde of Degas.

Gritty counterpoints

"Playing Music" is a party scene, with a woman in white, men in black formal, a dash of red on top of the piano, against a background of tannish brown and pale tangerine. The human figures are faceless and baldheaded.

In "Woman with Piano" and "Woman-Love," the slender figure of a woman in a slinky black dress with a brown cello or a black piano, respectively, is rendered anonymous because of this facelessness, as impersonal as the objects she possesses.

In "Flowers for My Beloved," a woman in a wrought-iron chair hangs her head while a man stands by holding a green bouquet with red flecks, against a backdrop of cream, white, black, burnt orange. The cloying coyness of the scene makes the viewer giddy.

The frothiness reaches its peak in "The Embrace," with its crescent moon, the swooning pose of the lovers, the white pink-flecked froth of the woman's dress occupying nearly half of the canvas, in a monochrome of black, gray and white with maroon undertone

Ryan Jimenez, 24, who majored in painting, is now working as a graphics artist. He has three pieces in the exhibit, gritty counterpoints to Garcia's whimsies.

"Dog," 1 and 2, are similar illustrations of a white dog in varying perspectives. The first piece shows the anterior part and head of the dog looking like a duck, while the second is the dog's hind part with head unseen and the white silhouette of a staircase on one side.

"8 to 5," a monochrome of black, white, gray and brown with a touch of olive-drab, has the white dog stretched from the top to the bottom of the canvas. There's a bay window with railing, a wrought-iron chair, stairs and arches. One gets the impression that the dog is being hung, slaughtered for food.

Surreal blending

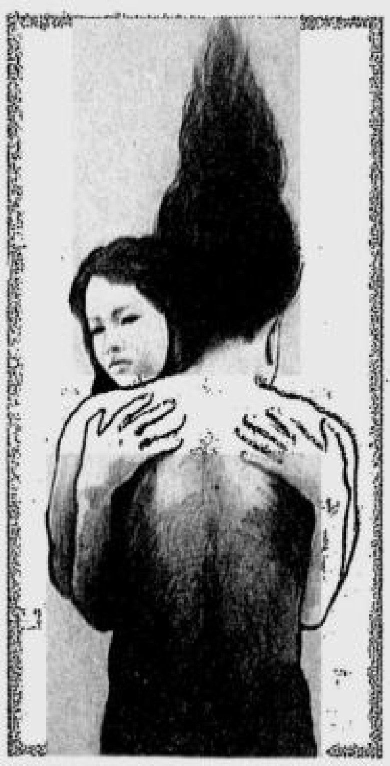
Mark V.P. Matabilas, 24, who also majored in painting, now works as art gallery curator. His four pieces are done in pencil and oil wash, then sprayed with fixative. These are expressionist pieces with imagery reminiscent of figures from José Tence Ruiz and Nunelucio Alvarado.

"Sadomasochistic Love Affair," predominantly yellow, red, blue and gray, has two voluptuous female nudes with pre-Raphaelite faces. One has scratches, gashes and bruises on her arm, stomach and breasts, while from her vulva streams a light-blue fluid where sperm cells are swimming. The men are here represented as dogs with blue-green faces, red eyes, red pointed tongues, white razorlike teeth and orange ribcage.

"Natural-Born Killer" is a caustic portrait of a man wearing a jacket with patches of the peace sign and the American flag, gun and bandoleer, female breasts forming his bulging eyes, female genital forming his lips. Only when one looks closer and makes out the beard and turban does one recognize America's Enemy No. 1.

"Sweet and Tender Hooligan" is a cartoonlike image of actor Woody Harrelson as he appeared in Oliver Stone's film.

"Scarface" is a close-up of a cartoonish face with scars and the same breasts-eyes and labia-lips, the positioning of the nose and mouth forming what look like the folds of a crotch and thighs. Here, as in the imagery of the other three pieces, is a surreal blending of sex and violence.



OLAN Ventura's "Lovers"

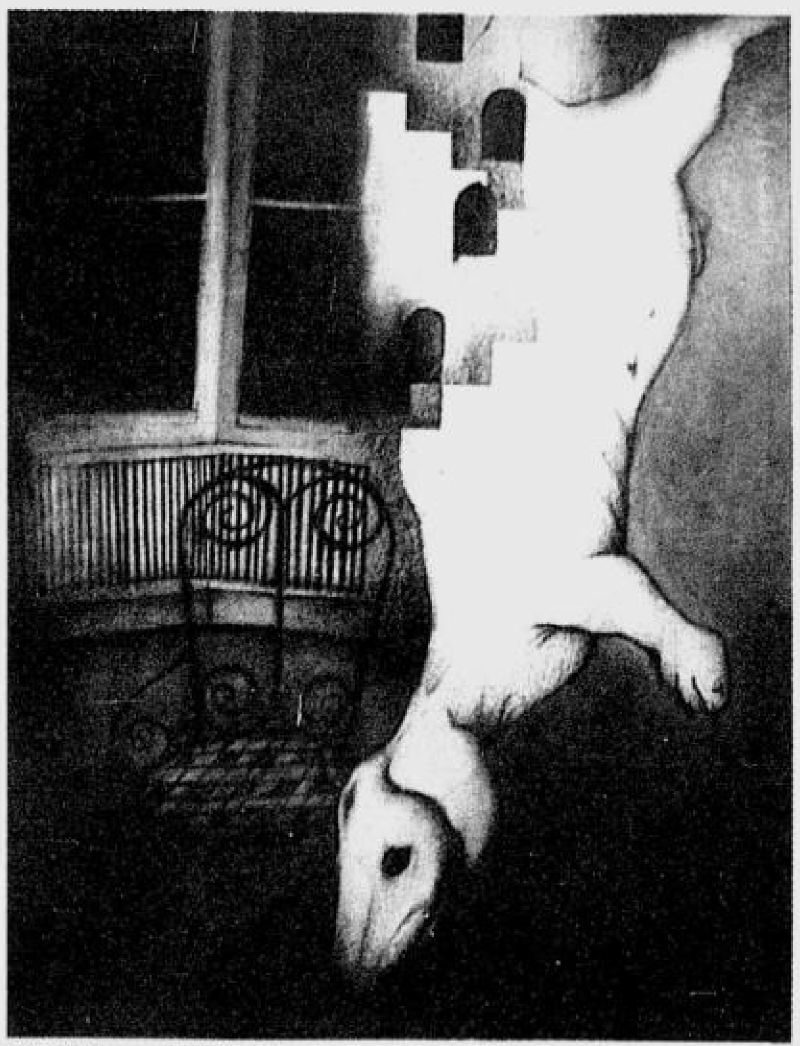
Daring approach

Wesley Valenzuela, 27, who majored in advertising, won first place in the Metrobank competition in watercolor. He's now a professor in UST and College of the Holy Spirit. In his three pieces, particularly in the large high relief, he exhibits a more daring approach to his art.

The two "Untitled" pieces in watercolor are similar abstractions in violet, gold, red, blue and crimson. Though small in scale, they grab the viewer with the darkness of vision and emotion conveyed by the strong solid colors.

"Everybody Loves Me But You" is in mixed media of resin, metal, wood, acrylic and oil. Composed of streaks of red, violet, blue, orange, fuchsia, gold, and a wooden panel as portal with mechanical nuts, it shows the lower half of a man's face and his torso, with the door or window to his heart surrounded by golden flames and fixed with a padlock. Below are halves of 20 spheroids glued on the wooden panel, with one having spikes.

The image seems to have a religious connotation, of the Sacred Heart, of the Betrayal in the Garden—which would elevate this piece to iconography.



RYAN Jimenez's "8 to 5"

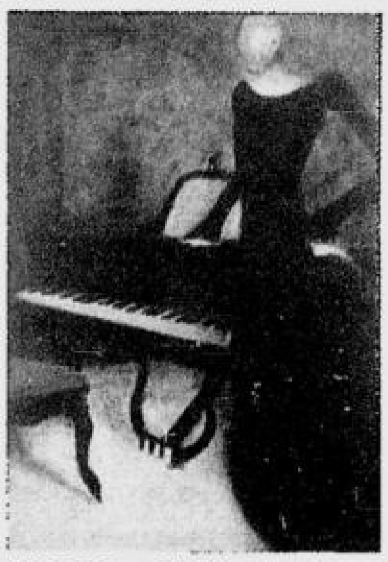
Olan Ventura, 25, is the only one in the group who's not from UST. He majored in advertising at the University of the East, and was a third-placer in the Metrobank competition in watercolor. He's now into film animation.

With 10 pieces, he has the most number in the exhibit. They're mostly female nudes, rather like studies, but four are grabbers.

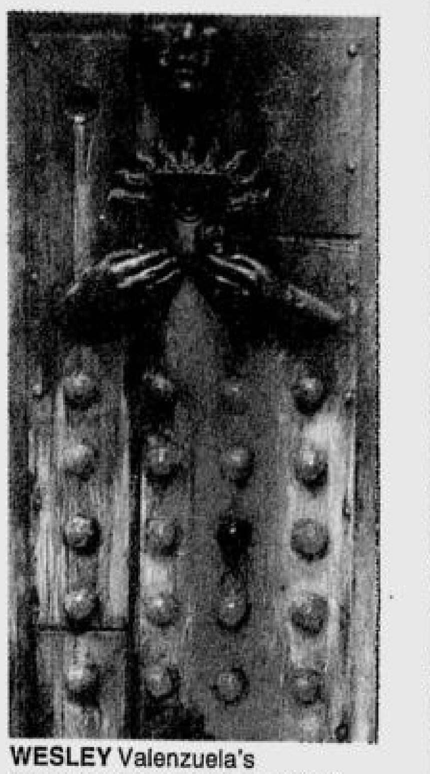
Whimsical twist

"Lovers" has two brown bodies with white shoulders and white masklike faces, embracing against a background of searing yellow.

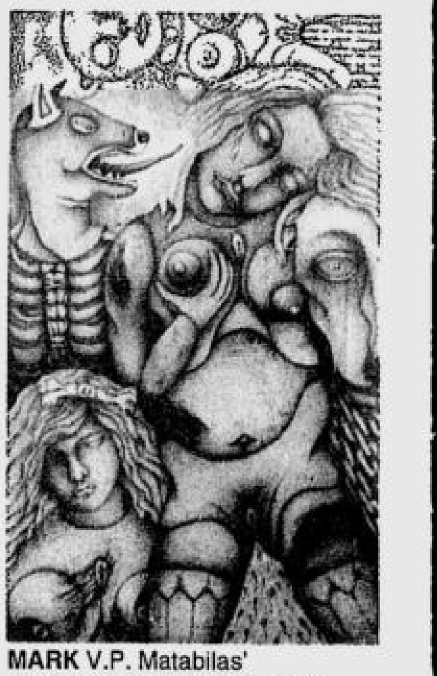
"Ghostly Embrace" is a bigger version, with a vanishing white woman covering the eyes of a brown man facing the viewer, both naked except for the tangle of blanket joining their bodies.



PEDRO Garcia's "Woman with Piano"

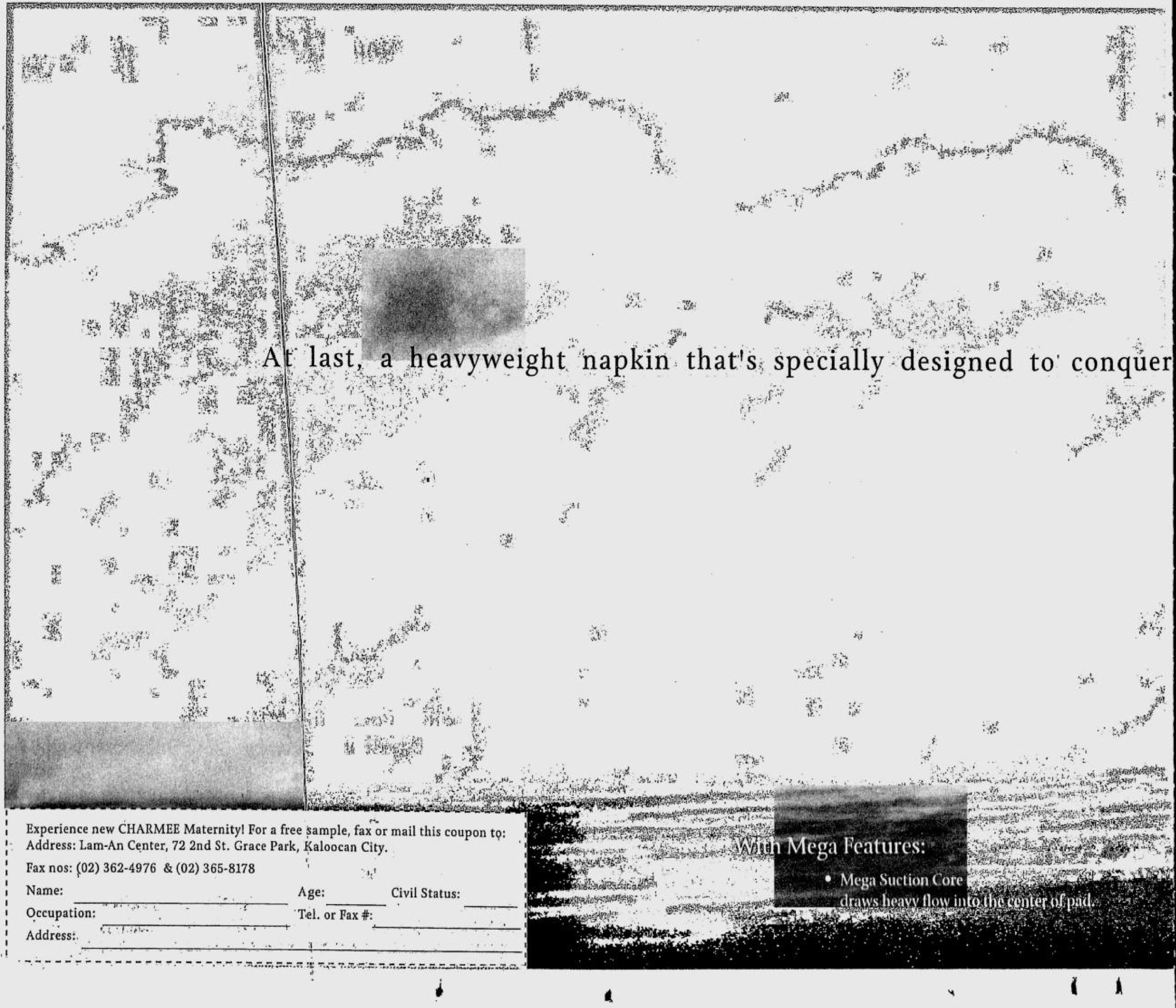


WESLEY Valenzuela's "Everybody Loves Me But You"



MARK V.P. Matabilas' "Sadomasochistic Love Affair"

"Lovers" 2 has the woman wrapped in a red blanket and the man with only brown trousers, his body highlighted in white, the woman's face brown while the man's a white kabuki mask, against



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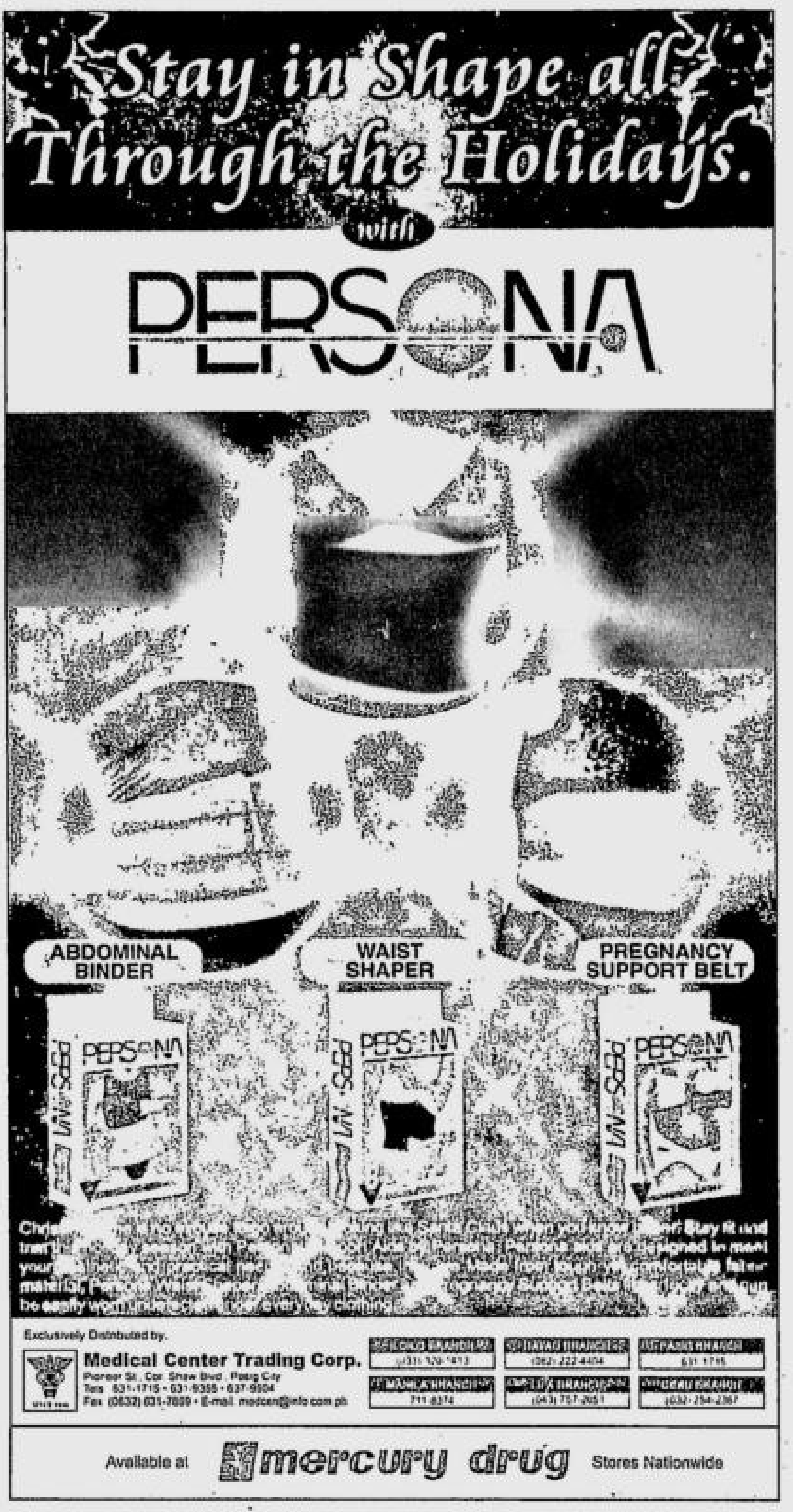
a flat plane of slate-blue.

"Tyler" is a brown dog (probably the painter's best friend), with gold acrylic highlighting the fur and whiskers. As a whimsical twist, a glittery Christmas star has been glued on the dog's forehead. The exhibit's title was taken from an album of the band Suede, and, in turn, it obviously inspired this piece.

Matabilas explains they take the title to mean the friendship among them, their bonding through art, and what they hope to achieve.

"For now we can't be full-time with our art because of our jobs," he says. "But I'm committed to it. Yes, until I grow old. Because it's my best way of expression. *Malalabas ko lahat doon. Puwede akong pumatay ng tao, sa* drawing *lang. Walang bawal.*"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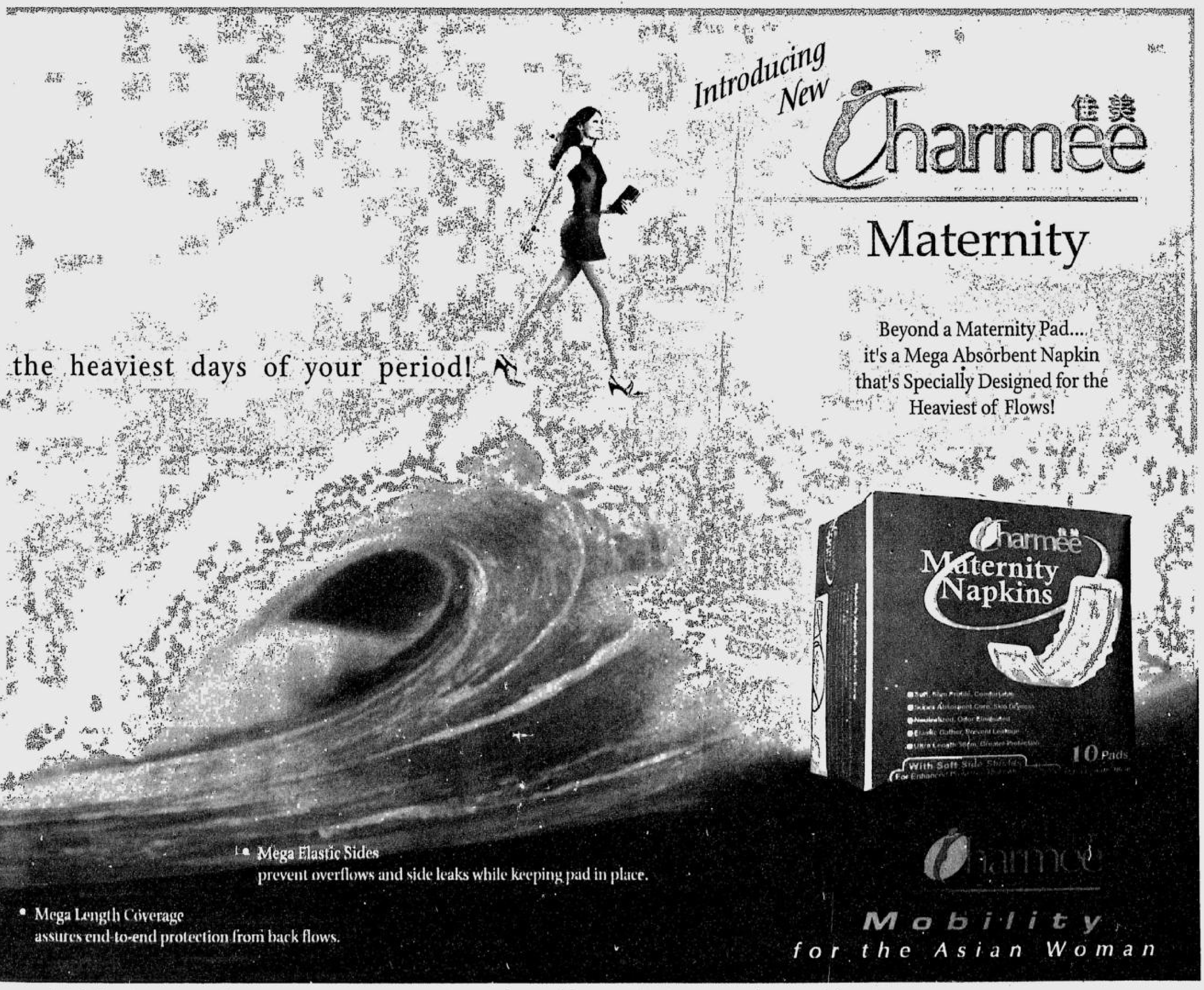
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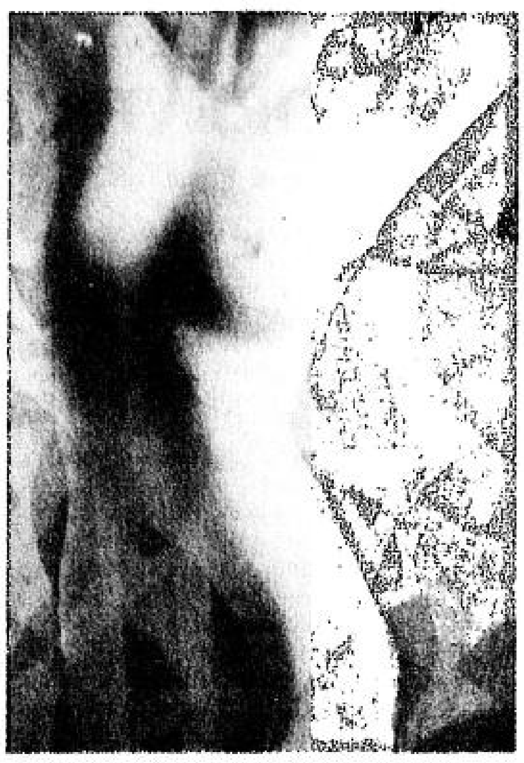
Caña at West-Glorietta, Cabrera at Crucible, art sale at Heart Center



"GOLDEN CHARM" by Frank Caña Valencia at West Gallery

VISUAL ARTS

FRANK Caña Valencia, younger brother of watercolorist Juan "Magoo" Valencia, will hold his first solo show, "Peep Into Kaleidoscopic Nudes," which features watercolors of his favorite subject matter—the female form—at the West Gallery (3/L, Glorietta 4, Ayala Center, Makati City) on Dec. 6-14. Caña majored in advertising at the University of Santo Tomas and heads Quadra Graphics, the design studio of J. Romero and Associates. In 1994, his works were exhibited at the Al-Mahmal Third International Artist Exhibition in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, where he was the sole Filipino participant. Call 752-7028 to 29.

CABRERA AT CRUCIBLE. Baguio-based painter and graphic artist Benedicto Cabrera is the next featured artist in Crucible Gallery's (4/F Building A, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City) "Four Paintings and a Sculpture" series. Cabrera will exhibit "4 Paintings and 4 Bronzes," all of human forms. The exhibit opens tomorrow at 6 p.m. The exhibit will run until Dec. 17. Call 635-6061.

ART SALE. The Metro Gallery, with the Philippine Heart Center, holds a two-week pre-Christmas art sale, "An Art Exhibit of Contemporary Filipino Artists," until Dec. 8, at the lobby of the Medical Arts Building of the Philippine Heart Center, East Avenue, QC.

A percentage of the exhibit's net sale will be donated to the street children of Manila with the assistance of Manila Councilor Isko Moreno. The Metro Gallery is at 455 P. Guevarra St., San Juan, Metro Manila. Call 726-6751 or 0917-8115399 and 0917-4745861.

CORDOVA AT GALLERY 139. Emmanuel L. Cordova's ninth solo exhibit, "Food Trip," features 17 original works in watercolor and is open until Dec. 5 at Gallery 139 (3/L, Glorietta 4, Ayala Center, Makati City).

OMI Reyes opened his 12th one-man show, "A Dance of Light on Blooms," at Gallery 828 (Shangri-La Plaza Mall, Mandaluyong City) on Nov. 24. The opening was attended by Susan Reyes, the artist's wife, Mandaluyong Mayor Benhur Abalos, Margie Ortiz-Luis and Jessie Tan.

MAGNO ART GALLERY. Artist Carlo Magno's latest one-man show, "Looking Back," is open until Dec. 10, at the Art Gallery Philippines (Glorietta 4, Ayala Center, Makati). Cocktails will be served on Dec. 4 at 6 p.m.

DIAZ AT THE DRAWING ROOM. Florence-based sculptor Duddley Diaz mounts his latest exhibit of sculptures, drawings and jewelry at The Drawing Room (Metrostar Building, 1007 Metropolitan Avenue, Makati City) until Dec. 19. Call the Drawing Room at 897-6990/7877 or Galleria Duemila at 831-9990/833-9815.

ROLLO AT GALLERY FIVE DAVAO. Christopher Rollo mounts his seventh solo exhibit, "Soul Rites of My Island," which presents celebrations of life, birth, friendship, courtship, play, conflict, harvest and community togetherness of Mindanao's cultural communities: the Lumads, Muslims and Christians. The exhibit is on view at the Gallery Five (5/L of JS Gaisano Citimall, V. Ilustre Street, Davao City).

VAN DER LINDEN AT THE FINALE. The Sept. 11 disaster and its aftermath are the subjects of Didit Robillo van der Linden's seventh one-woman show at the Finale Art Gallery (4/L, Building A, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City) until Dec.9. Call 634-2410/2411.

THREE ARTISTS AT PINTO GALLERY. Pinto Art Gallery (1 Sierra Madre, Grand Heights, Antipolo City) presents Salingpusa members Ferdinand Montemayor, Jim Orencio and Mikel Parial. Orencio's "Dreams," featuring recent works in oil, will be on view at Gallery 1. Montemayor presents pastels in his ninth solo exhibit, "Land," at the Gallery II. Parial's show at the Gallery Shop consists of acrylic paintings of games and play. The three exhibits will run until Jan. 23. Call 697-1015.

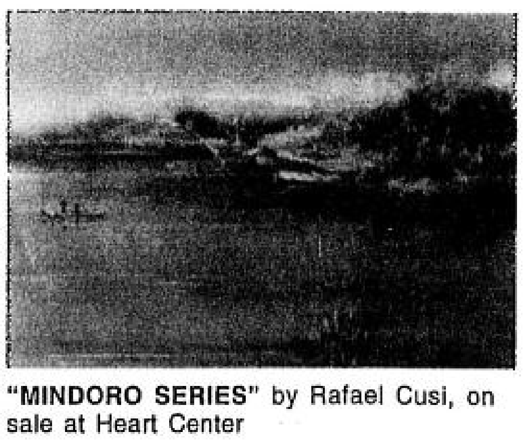
ENRIQUEZ AT FINALE. Francesca Enriquez shows paintings of plush interiors at the Finale Art Gallery (SM Megamall) on Dec. 11 to Jan. 2. National Artist Ang Kiukok and Ting Ping Lay will hold a joint show at the Finale Art File on Dec. 12 to Jan. 9.

CAVESTANY AT THE ART CENTER. Valeria Cavestany presents "Kaleidoscope," her biggest exhibit of paintings, sculptures and installations. The show will also be an occasion to launch "Valeria," a monograph on her art. Until Dec.15 at the Art Center (SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City).

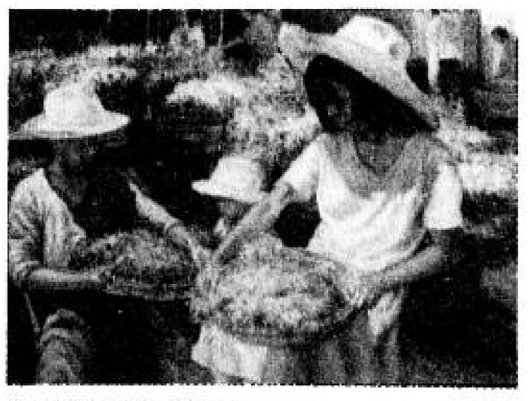
ZABALLERO AT GALLERIA DUEMILA. Phyllis Zaballero will mount "Repast" at Galeria Duemila on Dec. 5. The show brings together memory and imagination of a life presented in the brilliant hues of the Mediterranean and the glaring colors of the tropics. The exhibit will run until Dec. 20. Call 831-9990, 634-3261, 833-9815 and 633-6687 (telefax).

GROUP EXHIBIT. On Dec. 8, Gallery Ivydell (G/L, Gallery Building, Amorsolo Street, Creekside, Legaspi Village, Makati City) will present works of artists Jes Garcia, Domeng Labordo, Nards Zepeda, Bing Siochi, Caloy Gabuco, Mar Cempron, Mark Celeste, Solomon Saprid, Elver Panuela, Romeo Lacson, Robert Abog, Grace Manahan, Philip Badon, Ramon Doplon, Nick Arranda, Rudolf Gonzalez, Leonardo

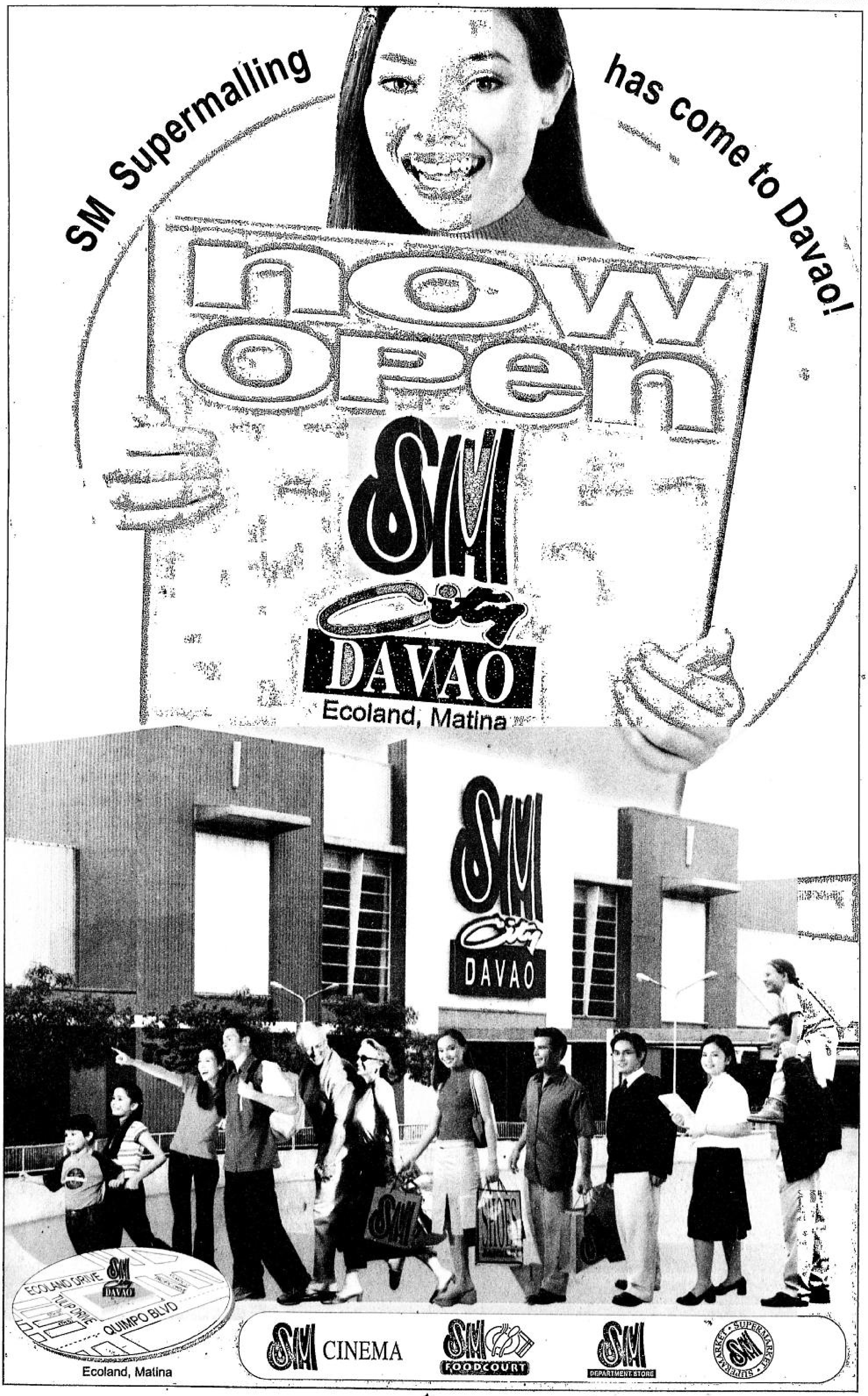
CANA/ p.D7



"MINDORO SERIES" by Rafael Cusi, on sale at Heart Center



"YOUTHFUL FORTITUDE" by Celso Pepito is part of the exhibit "Ang Bayan Kong Pilipino," mounted by Ugnayan Pilipino Arts Foundation Inc. at the Galeria de Las Islas (3/F of Silahis Center, 744 Gen. Luna St., Intramuros, Manila). Call 527-2113.



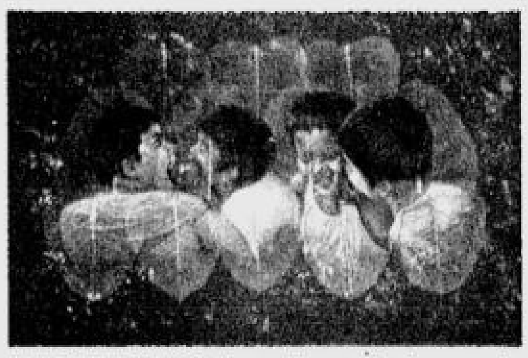
Caña at . . .

(From page D6)

Navarro, Art Cuvinar, Solano Cruz, Robert Balajadia, Letty Lam, Ton Raymundo, and Ritchie Tagle, among others. Dubbed "Our Lady in Art," the show features paintings, drawings and porcelain plates revolving around the mother-and-child theme. Call 816-0904.

REYES AT VARGAS MUSEUM. Fabric artist Winnie Rose Reyes opens her first solo exhibit, "Circle of Existence," at the UP Vargas Museum. Her whimsical works are made from plain and painted fabric embellished with feather, glass, crystal and wire, intricately sewn together. A fine arts teacher at the University of Santo Tomas, Reyes will reveal in the exhibit her spiritual journey while negotiating her everyday existence. At the opening, she will perform a ritual honoring the five elements of earth, air, fire, water and spirit. Call 928-1927 or 920-5301, local 7407.

SHOWS AT GSIS MUSEUM. The GSIS Museum of Art features its permanent collection of works of National Artists Jose Abueva, Botong Francisco, Fernando Amorsolo, Vicente Manansala and H. R. Ocampo and a dozen contemporary Filipino artists. Also featured are the winning entries and finalists in the 54th Art Association of the Philippines art competition and "Limbag," an exhibit of old prints from the collection of former GSIS president and general manager Federico Pascual. Call 551-1301.



"APPLE EATING," acrylic on dry leaves, is part of the exhibit-sale "Kulay sa Dahon," by Voltz Perez at Galeria de las Islas (3/F Silahis Center, 744 Gen. Luna St., Intramuros, Manila). Over 30 acrylic on dry leaves paintings will be shown. Call 527-2113.

Christmas décor exhibit, fund-raising at UST Museum

THE UST Museum of Arts and Sciences, with the Interior Design Department of the UST College of Fine Arts and Design, opens the annual Christmas decor competition and exhibition "Kabuuang Liwanag sa Pagdiriwang ng Pasko" on Dec. 4.

On display and sale are Christmas accents, colors, furnishings and creative art works produced by the interior design students as a result of their participation in the workshops under the auspices of the UST Museum. The works are part of the competition. Exhibit curators are Prof. Mary Anne Venturina Bulanadi and Prof. Rodolfo Olaso.

Alongside the exhibition is the launching of "Punong-puno ng Liwanag," a light-up-the-Christmas-tree fund-raising project. Silong Tanglaw Foundation is this year's beneficiary.

The organizers are appealing to donors so that the children of the Silong Tanglaw Foundation will have a happy Christmas. The Museum will hold a party for the children on Dec. 16. Forward donations to the UST Museum on or before Dec. 15. Call the project coordinator, Jocelyn Dare Tullao, at 781-1815.

The awarding of winners, exhibition opening and the lighting of the Christmas tree will be done simultaneously tomorrow at 6 p.m. at the UST Museum's Main Exhibition Hall, UST Main Building, Calle España, Manila.

The UST Museum is open Tuesday to Friday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

THE ARTIST with (from left) Lucia P. Uy, Hilarion Uy, Cristina Enriquez, Carmen Tan, Florencio Lim, Karlu T. Say, Amen Say, Lolita Lee, Rene Lee and Jacinto Yao

WITH ELENITA Lim, Annabell Ong, Diana Malapas, Teddy Ong, Cheryl Chua, Luna and Lovina Malapas

James Onglepho in 'dream show'

JAMES Onglepho is living a dream—being able to do what he loves best, painting. Every year, he treats art and nature lovers alike to his renditions of landscapes and flowers like they've never seen before. It is because he paints not from pictures, but with his emotions.

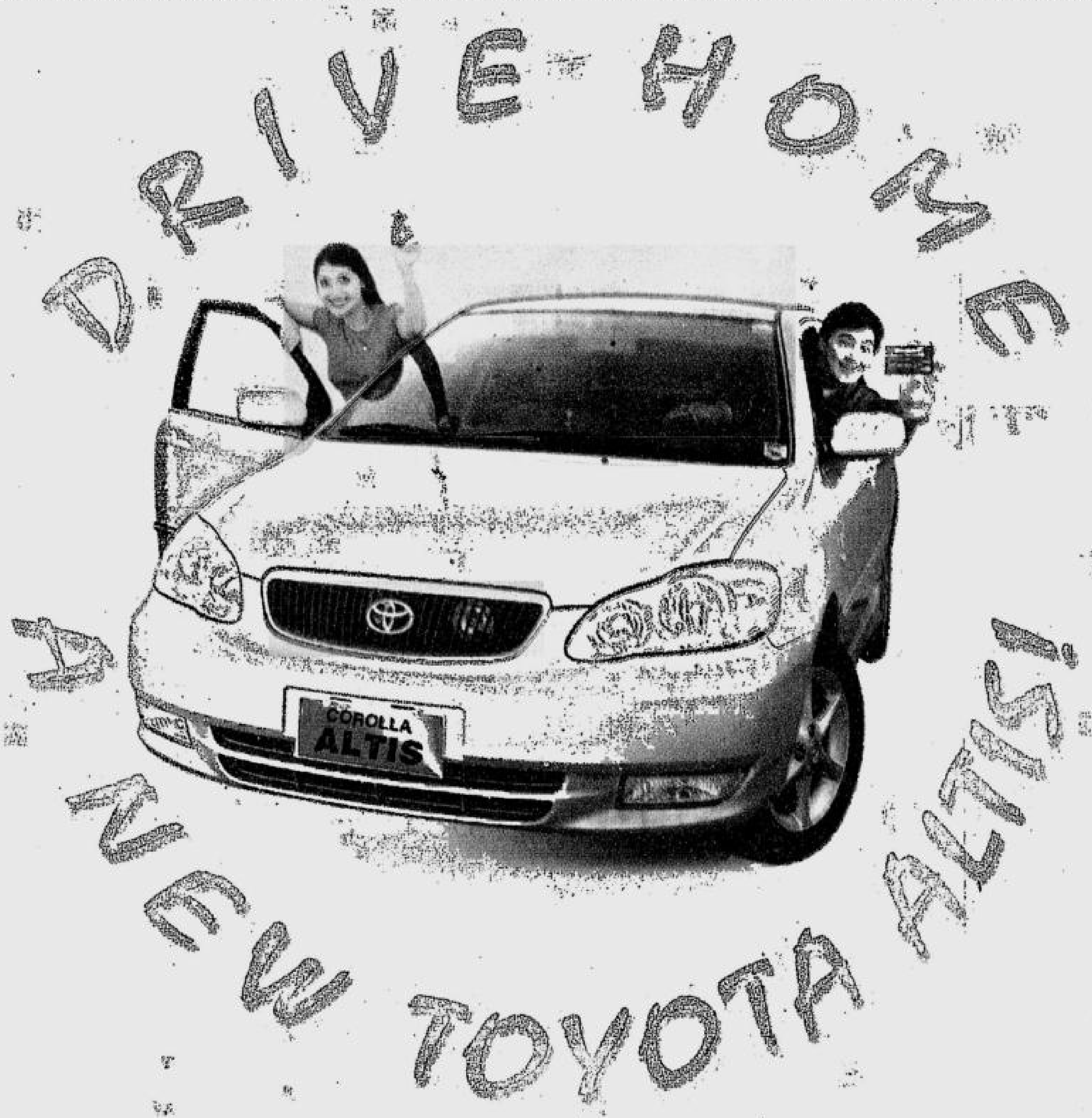
James does it all in his studio. He recalls how he felt being one with nature in his travels and painting them with the background music of his choice, Beethoven or Filipino folk music. That's why his semi-abstract landscapes and flowers are so soothing to the eyes, awe-inspiring as he first saw them.

Among those who attended the opening night of the artist's annual one-man show at the Asia Art Gallery were guest of honor Tomas C. Zita, Tereso U. Cocabo, Eric S. Pesengco and Carmen Tan, artist Malang, close relatives and artist-friends.

ARTIST James Onglepho, Malang, Bunglan, Eric S. Pesengco, Tomas Zita and Tereso U. Cocabo

MR. and Ms Johnson Ang

WITH MAX Sumulong, Wilson Ma, Anna, Frank Verano, Cris Cruz, Tony Varquez and Jessie Alfonso



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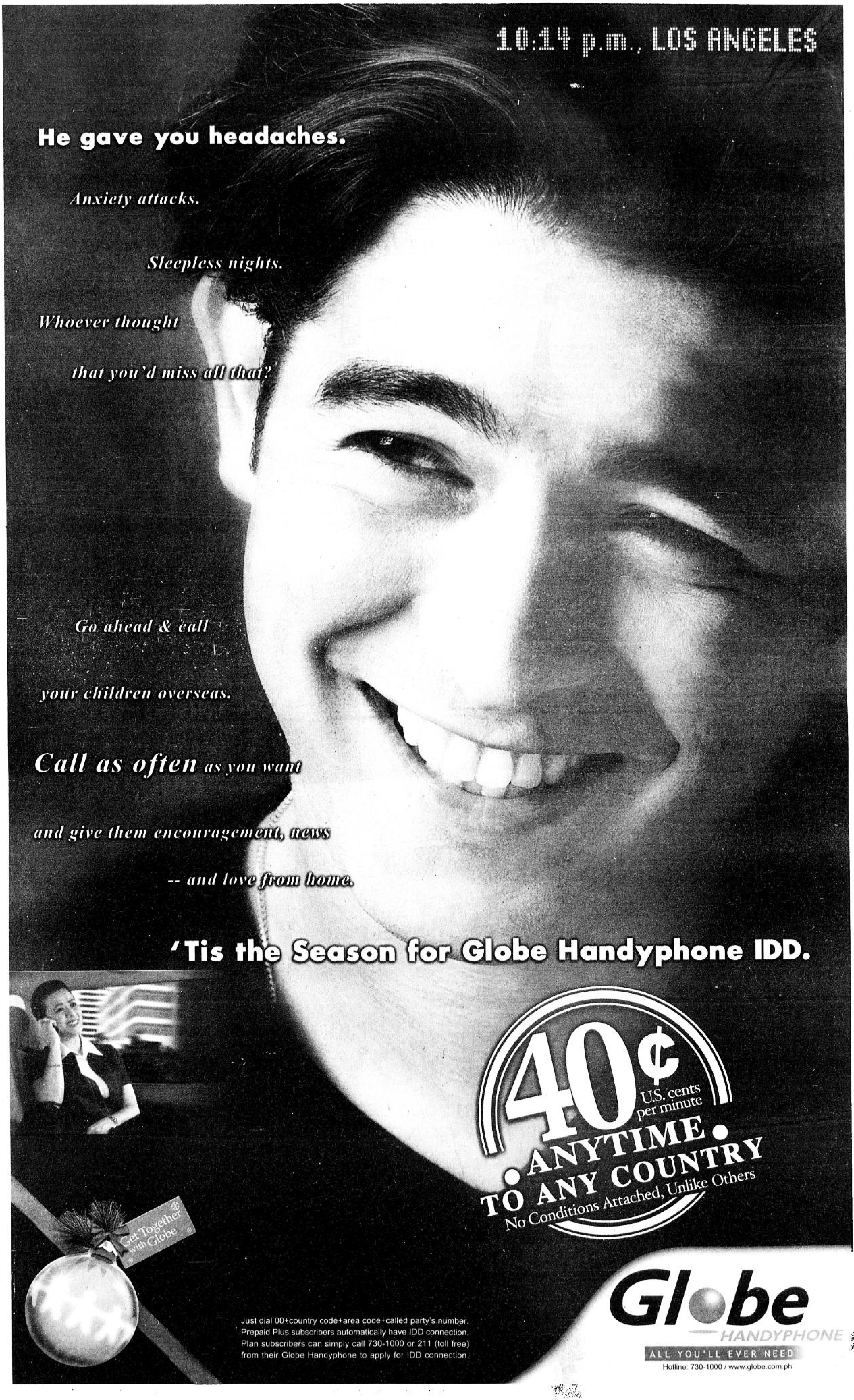

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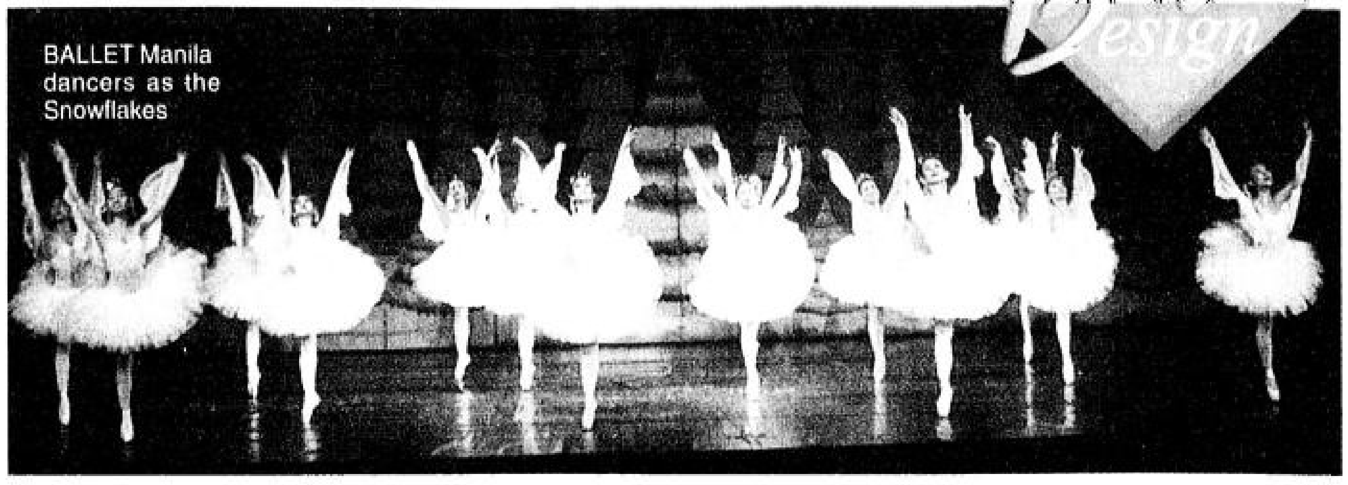

BALLET Manila dancers as the Snowflakes

Lisa Macuja-Elizalde in 'Nutcracker'

DANCING dolls and mice. Toy soldiers coming to life. Pretty snowflakes all in a row. A nutcracker transformed into a prince. Ballet Manila breathes life to all these characters in its Christmas production, "The Nutcracker." The well-loved holiday tale goes on stage this month at the Star Theater in Star City.

"The Nutcracker" is a Christmas ballet in two acts with music by Peter Tchaikovsky and choreography by Vassily Vainonen with revisions by Moscow-based guest ballet master Viktor Saveliev and BM principal danseur Osias Barroso. Artistic director is Lisa Macuja-Elizalde.

The ballet is set on Christmas Eve at the house of a young girl, Masha, whose parents are hosting a party. Her Uncle Drosselmeyer gives her a nutcracker doll, which she instantly falls in love with. Later that night, while sleeping by the Christmas tree, Masha dreams of an amazing battle between toy soldiers and giant rats.

The nutcracker turns into a prince who takes Masha on a magical trip. Together they encounter giant butterflies and bats, dolls from Spain, Arabia, China and Russia, and waltzing flowers. Masha finds herself dancing with the prince in his palace, amid a very interesting cast. She wakes up with the nutcracker cradled in her arms, cherishing the memories

LISA/ p.E2

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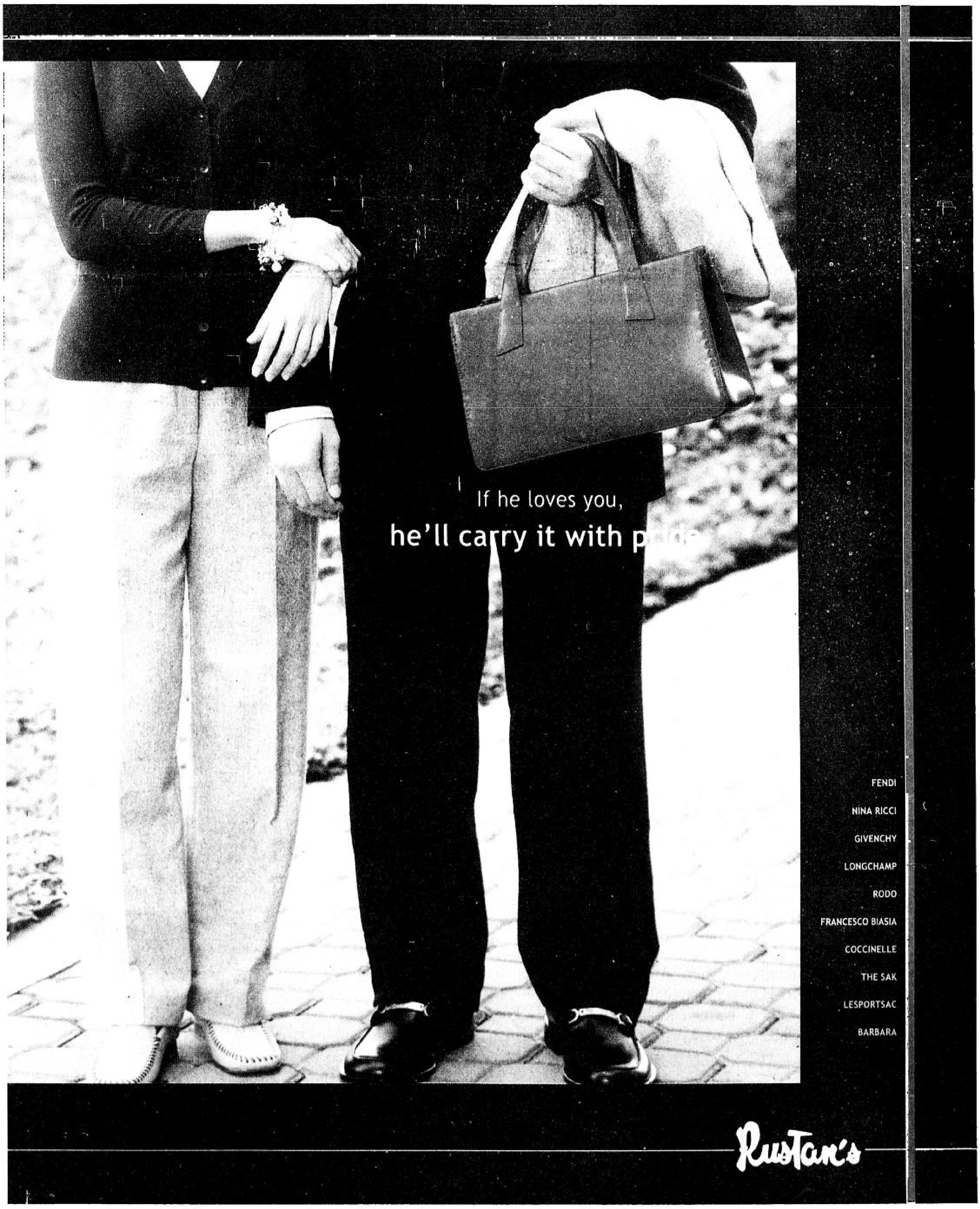


Foreign-based Pinoy artists perform in well-received homecoming concerts

BY PABLO TARIMAN
Contributor

GARY del Rosario

LEMUEL dela Cruz

TWO young foreign-based Filipino singers came home last month and figured in two well-received recitals.

The first was Cleveland-based tenor Gary del Rosario who did a recital at the Francisco Santiago Hall on Nov. 23 and another one in Cebu City on Nov. 29. The latest is California-based Maria Cristina Viguilla-Navarro who studied at the Bieler Conservatory in Switzerland and sung at the CCP to close the current season of the CCP's Filipino Artists Series.

Accompanied by Regalado Jose, Del Rosario started with a section from the Handel oratorio ("Thou Shalt Break Them from the Messiah") and ended with San Pedro's three little-known art songs ("Of Long Ago," "Sa Simula Ako'y Labong" and "Sampatak na Hamog").

But Del Rosario's shining moment in the first part was Duparc's "Chanson Triste" and "L'Invitation Au Voyage." Here, Del Rosario brought out the artist in him and defined the songs with quiet intensity. Regalado Jose proved a most sensitive assisting artist and at this stage, one realized that he had a lot more to offer the concert-going public.

The last part (Tamino's aria from "Magic Flute," "Adio fiorito asil" from "Madama Butterfly," the "Flower Song" from "Carmen," "La donna e mobile" from "Rigoletto" and "Che gelida manina" from "Boheme") showed Del Rosario's staying power in the high register and stunned further his audience by doing Nessun Dorma for an encore.

Del Rosario's arias thrilled, but it was the art songs that defined him as a young artist.

There is also a lot to appreciate in the recital of soprano Maria Cristina Viguilla Navarro, who was excellently accompanied by J. Greg Zuniega. She has amazing technical facility and if she chooses her future repertoire with good taste, she can be molded into a promising Joan Sutherland.

One noted this possibility in her opening number, "L'amero, saro costante" from Mozart's "Il Re Pastore" and on to Saint Saens' "The Nightingale and The Rose," Alabief's "The Nightingale and The Willow Song" from "The Ballad of Baby Doe."

But when she hurriedly turned to "The Vengeance" aria (from "The Magic Flute") and a cluster of songs that showed off her spectacular high notes, one began to reel from an overdose of vocal trills. In the end, it became a tiresome program that didn't give listeners a chance to appreciate her lyric side. What one heard was a master technician and a vocal acrobat and very little of the promising artist.

I think people behind the Filipino Artists Series should take time to advise recitalists and make them understand the difference between a well-chosen program and a showy one.

Here and there

Our condolences to the family of conductor and music educator Bernardino Custudio who passed away on Nov. 23. He was one of the first Filipino conductors to lead the Manila Symphony Orchestra that was founded and initially nurtured by two foreigners—Alexander Lippay and Herbert Zipper. In fact, it was Custudio who led the MSO in the Philippine orchestral debut of legendary violinist Sir Yehudi Menuhin who was the MSO soloist in the Mendelssohn concerto performed in 1947 at the UST Gym.

A cello treat not to be missed is the performance of three cello concertos—Saint Saens, Haydn and Schumann—by cellist Wilfredo Pasamba with pianist Nita Abrogar Quinto on the piano. This will be held at the UP Abelardo Hall on Dec. 6. By the way, Ms Quinto's pupil, Juan Miguel Rivera, was the only one declared winner—second prize—in the category B-2 piano category of the recently concluded National Music Competition for Young Artist (Namcya). There were no first and third prizewinners.

The Ravel and Franck sonatas are the special treat in the return engagement of Romanian violin superstar Alexandru Tomescu when he debuts at the CCP Little Theater on Dec. 17. Pianist is J. Greg Zuniega. For tickets, call 721-7255 or 815-2651 or cell (0918) 737-6901. Tomescu will also be heard in Ilagan, Isabela on Dec. 20 and in Tuguegarao City on Dec. 21. Before Isabela, Tomescu will debut with the Manila Symphony Orchestra on Dec. 18 as soloist in the Sibelius concerto. It is a back-to-back concert with pianist J. Greg Zuniega who is soloist in the Tchaikovsky B Flat Concerto under the baton of Regalado Jose.

Tenor Lemuel de la Cruz was indisposed after arriving from Singapore where he was the tenor soloist in the Mozart Requiem performed at the Victoria Theater and accompanied by the Singapore Symphony. This was the reason he couldn't make it to Isabela and Tuguegarao to open the 2nd Cagayan Valley International Music Festival.

The ethnic musical instruments of Mindanao are showcased in the unique musical scoring of the new film of Marilou Daiz Abaya called "Bagong Buwan." Film scorer Nonong Buencamino had to stick to five notes and the music blended very well with the film's texture. We saw its video (interlock) version and I could say that Abaya captured what went wrong in the government's handling of the Mindanao crisis. Among the filmfest entries, Abaya's film on Mindanao is the most timely and the most evocative in capturing Muslim culture.

The concerto tour of pianist Ingrid Sala Santamaria with Reynaldo Reyes resumes in January with performances of Grieg, Schumann, Rachmaninof II and Tchaikovsky concertos in the following places: Hotel Alejandro in Tacloban City on Jan. 16; La Salle University in Iligan City on Jan. 18; Lourdes College in Cagayan de Oro City on Jan. 19; Meridian Hotel in Tagbilaran, Bohol on Jan. 22; Balay Negrense in Silay City on Jan. 23; and University of San Agustin in Iloilo City on Jan. 24 and 25. The series will end at the Concert at the Park on Jan. 27.

THE FOUR Sugar Plum Fairies—principal dancer Lisa Macuja-Elizalde, soloists Melanie Motus, Pamela Asper and Sandra Lynn Huang—and the Four Princes—principal dancer Osias Barroso, soloists Jeffrey Espejo, Eudardo and Jerome Espejo—with Viktor Saveliev as Drosselmeyer in "The Nutcracker"

Lisa Macuja-Elizalde in 'Nutcracker'

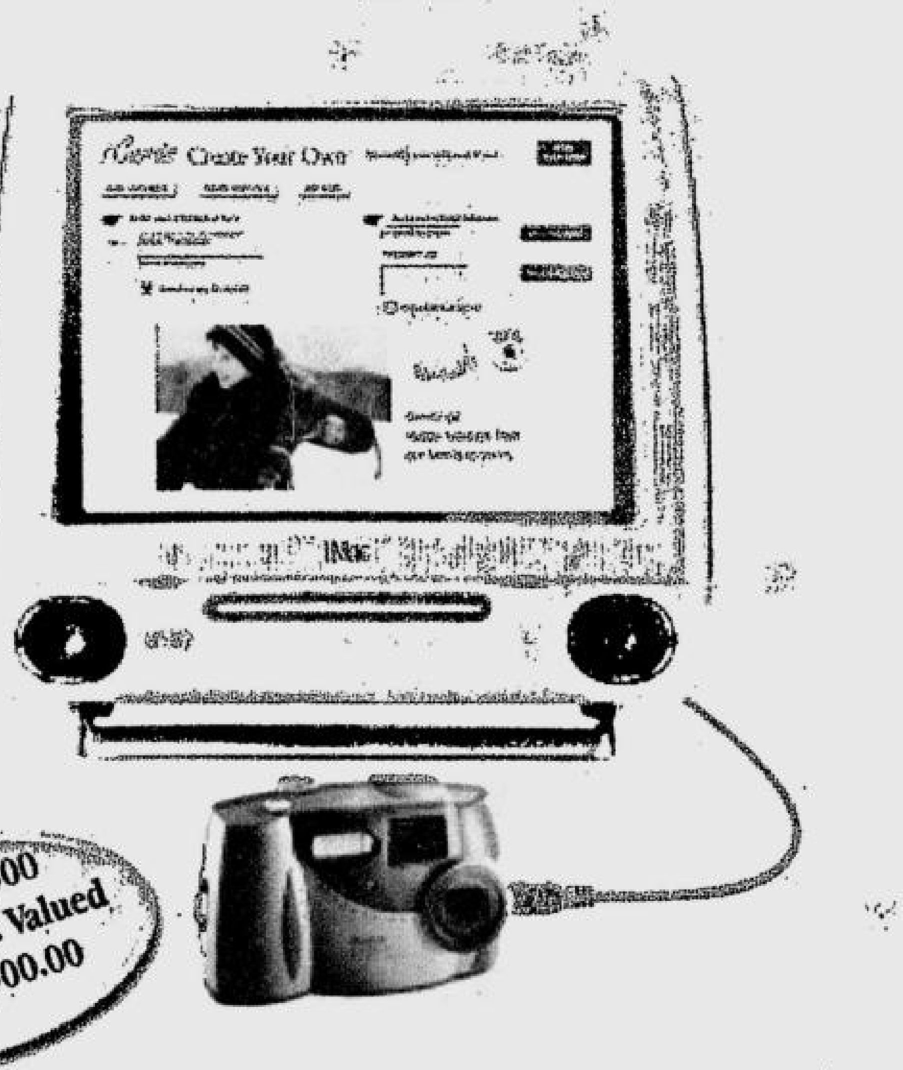
(From page E1)

of her extraordinary voyage.

Macuja-Elizalde assumes the role of Masha on all evening performances, with Melanie Motus, Pamela Asprer and Sandra Lynn Huang as alternates. Barroso is the Nutcracker Prince, alternating with Jeffrey Espejo, Eduardo Espejo and Jerome Espejo. They are supported by a full cast of Ballet Manila dancers, apprentices and scholars from the Ballet Manila School.

Performances of "The Nutcracker" will be at 8 p.m. on Dec. 7, 8, 14 and 15; 3 p.m. on Dec. 8, 9, 14, 15 and 16; and 11:30 a.m. on Dec. 14. All performances will be at the Star Theater, inside The Star City at the CCP Complex, Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City. Call 512-5031/32, 525-1655/1584; visit www.balletmanila.com or e-mail info@balletmanila.com. Tickets include free entrance to Star City and free rides.

LISA Macuja and Osias Barroso



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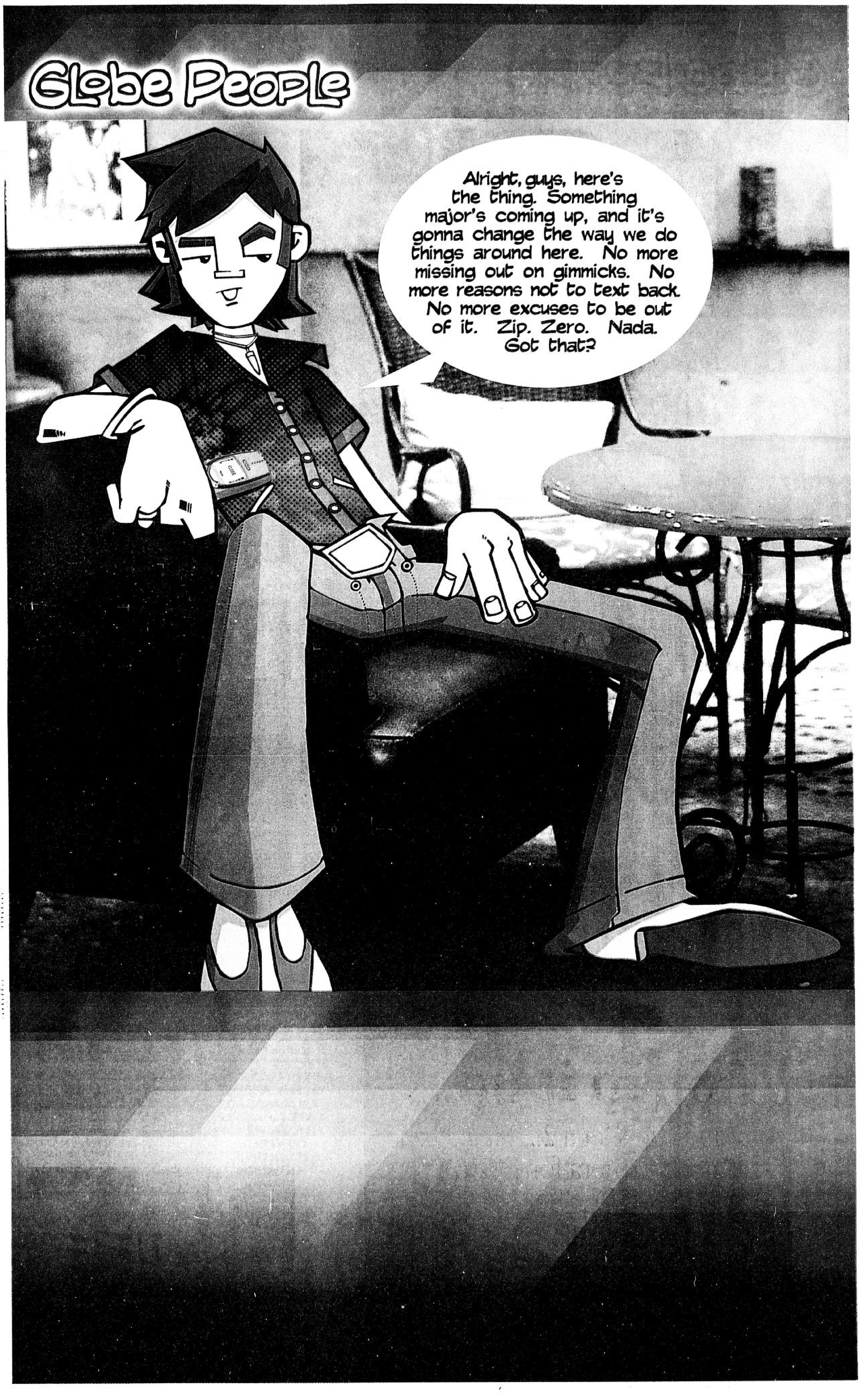
Globe People
Alright, guys, here's the thing. Something major's coming up, and it's gonna change the way we do things around here. No more missing out on gimmicks. No more reasons not to text back. No more excuses to be out of it. Zip. Zero. Nada. Got that?

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With better reloading options an
there's no excuse for

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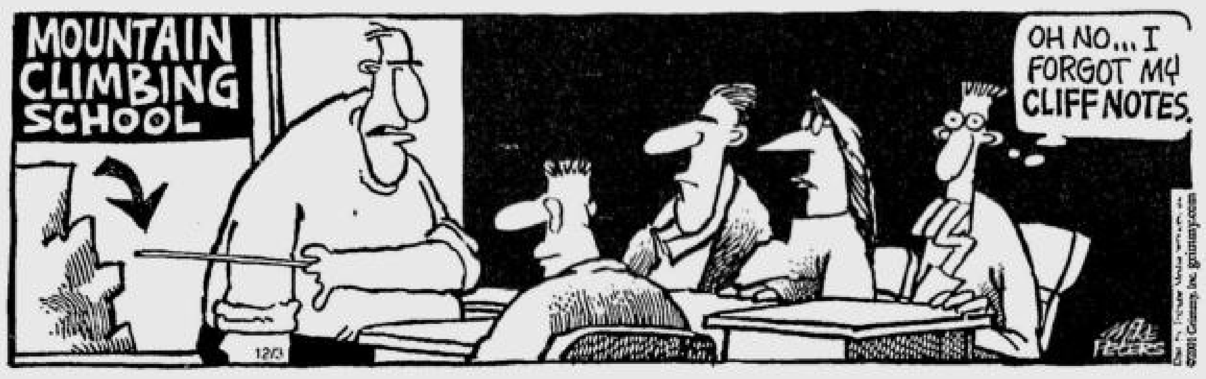
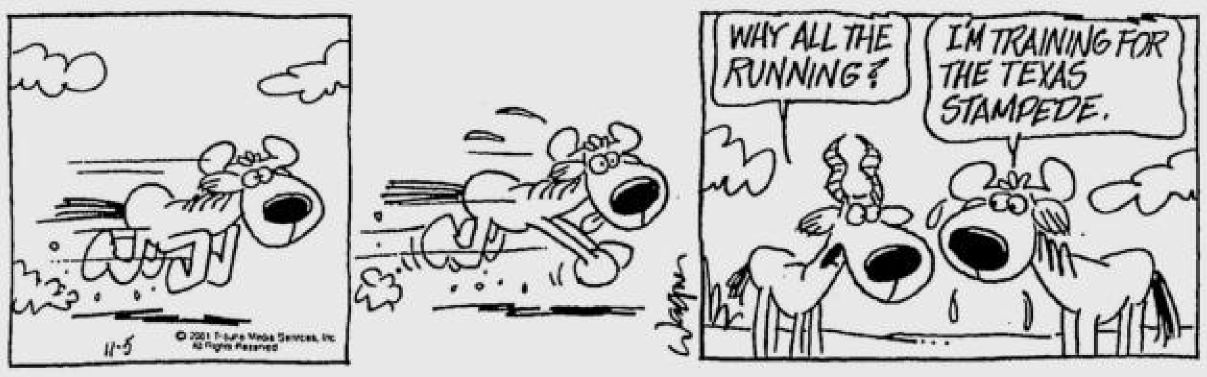
MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM

BY MIKE PETERS


MOUNTAIN CLIMBING SCHOOL
OH NO... I FORGOT MY CLIFF NOTES.
12/3
MIKE PETERS

ANIMAL CRACKER

BY FRED WAGNER


11-5
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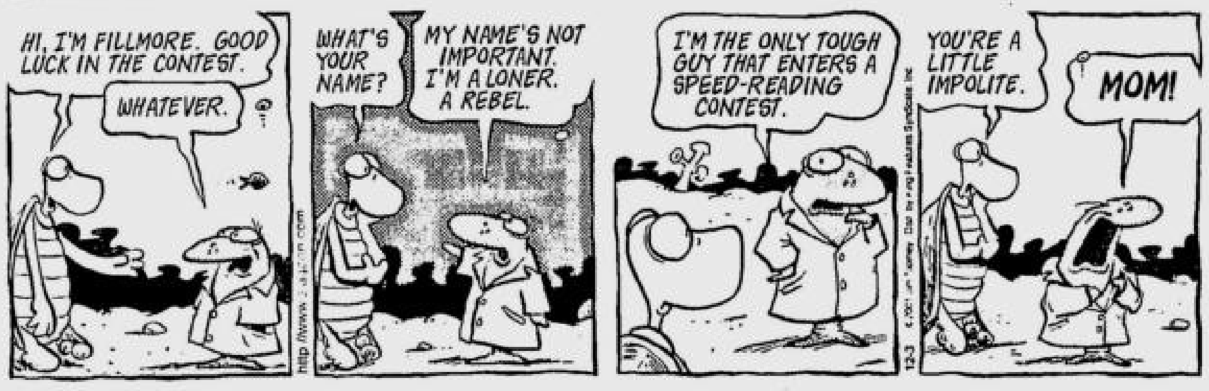
Wagner
WHY ALL THE RUNNING?
I'M TRAINING FOR THE TEXAS STAMPEDE.

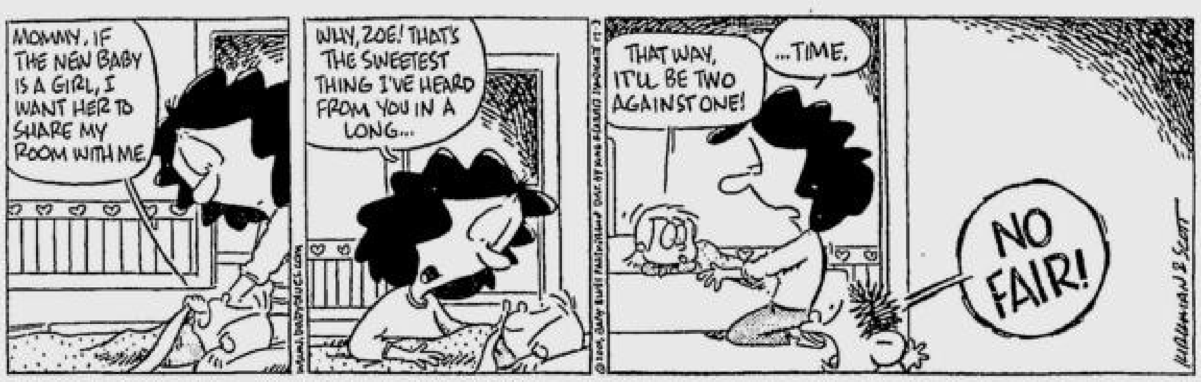
SHERMAN'S LAGOON

BY JIM TOOMEY


HI, I'M FILLMORE. GOOD LUCK IN THE CONTEST.
WHATEVER.
WHAT'S YOUR NAME?
MY NAME'S NOT IMPORTANT. I'M A LONER. A REBEL.
I'M THE ONLY TOUGH GUY THAT ENTERS A SPEED-READING CONTEST.
YOU'RE A LITTLE IMPOLITE.
MOM!
12-3

BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


MOMMY, IF THE NEW BABY IS A GIRL, I WANT HER TO SHARE MY ROOM WITH ME.
WHY, ZOE! THAT'S THE SWEETEST THING I'VE HEARD FROM YOU IN A LONG...
THAT WAY, IT'LL BE TWO AGAINST ONE!
...TIME.
NO FAIR!
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

HOROSCOPE

BY EUGENIA LAST

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Roseanne, Lulu, Larry Holmes, Ken Berry, Charles Bronson, Adam Ant

Happy Birthday: Expect your creative ideas to dazzle your peers and surprise your competitors. It's the year to push your projects and take a leadership position. Let those who believe in you do the tedious jobs. If you plan carefully and refrain from procrastinating, you will reach your highest potential. Your numbers: 7, 13, 18, 23, 36, 35

ARIES (March 21-April 19): You won't be thinking clearly. Don't take anything out of context or be undiplomatic when dealing with others. Carelessness could result in minor accidents.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): You've got an edge today. Don't overdo it; exhaustion or minor injury will slow you down. Think twice before spending on excessive purchases or entertainment.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Avoid disputes. Channel your energy wisely, or tempers will soar. Someone you care about may drive you crazy today. Physical activity will help alleviate stress.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Be honest with yourself and others. Secret affairs are never a good idea. You can't avoid rumors, and they would affect your reputation professionally and personally.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Your high energy and flamboyant nature will attract new friendships in group endeavors or clubs. Take the lead and let others follow you.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Don't blow situations out of proportion. Get all the facts. You could lose a good friend if you are critical and stubborn. Compromise, or you may end up alone.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): You can help someone dear to you, but don't lie or become caught up in a private affair. Be careful if traveling; your papers may not be in order.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): You must use discrimination. Don't overspend on those unworthy of your generosity. Examine organizations closely before donating to or joining them.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): You aren't likely to get along with loved ones today. You may have a fight on your hands if you have refused to recognize that something is bothering a loved one. Compromise is necessary.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Get busy and accomplish a lot today. You will feel less stressed and more like playing. Other people will appreciate your charisma.

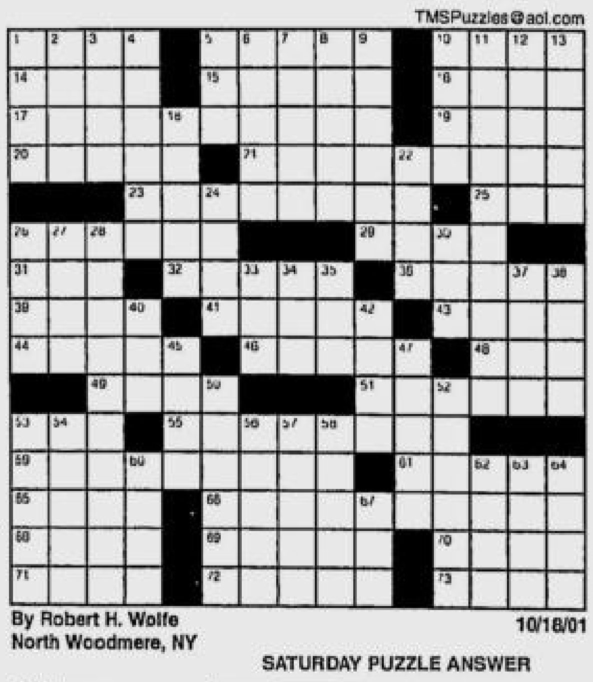
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Competitive sports or getting in shape should be penciled in today. You need an outlet to build up your self-esteem.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): A misunderstanding may cause problems with a business or emotional partner. Address the issues directly and sincerely before things escalate. The quicker you deal with this unfortunate circumstance the better.

Birthday Baby: You are a bright-eyed, curious inventor. You like to follow your own path and will always come up with interesting ideas. The more leeway you are given, the happier you will be.

DAILY CROSSWORD

TMSPuzzles@aol.com



By Robert H. Wolfe
North Woodmere, NY

10/18/01

ACROSS
1 Emcee Jack
5 Count of jazz
10 Did the butterfly
14 Up to the job
15 Jungian soul
16 Lima's land
17 Pungent, boastful talk?
19 Son of Adam
20 Got up
21 Settle in a country
23 One who lets go
25 __ Moines
26 Intense competition
29 Author of "The Fountainhead"
31 Nabokov novel
32 Flu type
36 Ethical
39 QB's command
41 Detection device
43 Sub shop
44 Martin or Allen
46 From now to then
48 Male heir
49 Brewed beverages
51 Thin paper
53 Cigar dropping
55 Most transparent
59 Something to write home about
61 Moolah
65 Matador's foe
66 Repeated gossip?
68 Persia, now
69 Provide with a trait
70 Chanel of fashion
71 Agts.
72 Verb for thee
73 Has creditors

DOWN
1 Dawber and Tillis
2 Border (on)
3 Too
4 Witty reply
5 Prevent
6 Actress MacDowell
7 Greek letter
8 Islamic scholars
9 Less difficult
10 Ship's pole
11 Speech online?
12 Craggy crest
13 Pack animals
18 Ms. Rogers St. Johns
22 Metric unit of mass
24 Fewer
26 Expressions of contempt
27 Mine entrance
28 Endure a discussion?
30 Wordless agreement
33 Gambler's marker
34 Miller or Landers
35 Styron's Turner
37 Baseball family name
38 Bit of dialogue
40 Night before
42 Religious ritual
45 Sunrise place
47 Extra-strong cotton thread
50 Out of the sun
52 Wall covering
53 Up and about
54 Fern seed
56 Bargain model: pref.
57 Slip away from
58 Picture puzzle
60 Those opposed
62 Grub
63 Paella base
64 Son of Seth
67 Do-over serve

SATURDAY PUZZLE ANSWER

B	O	N	E	S	■	S	W	A	B	■	T	G	I	F
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O	A	K	S	■	E	N	D	S	■	E	A	G	L	E

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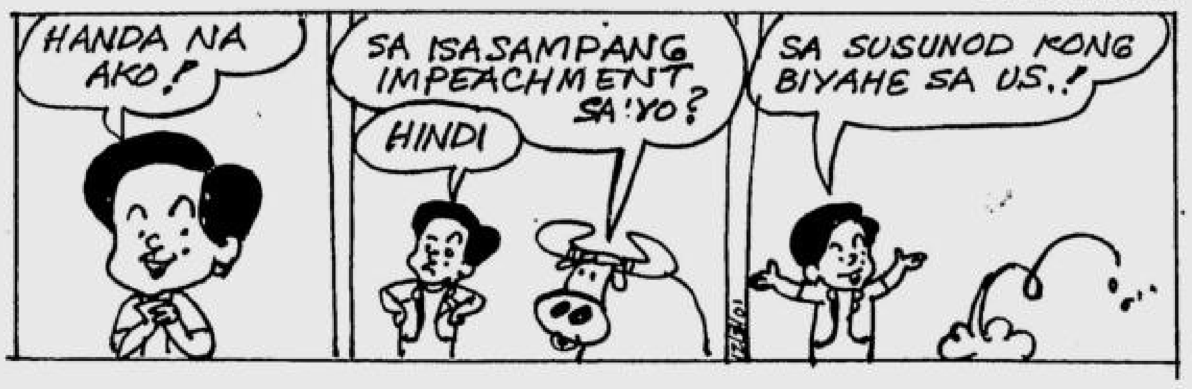
10/18/01

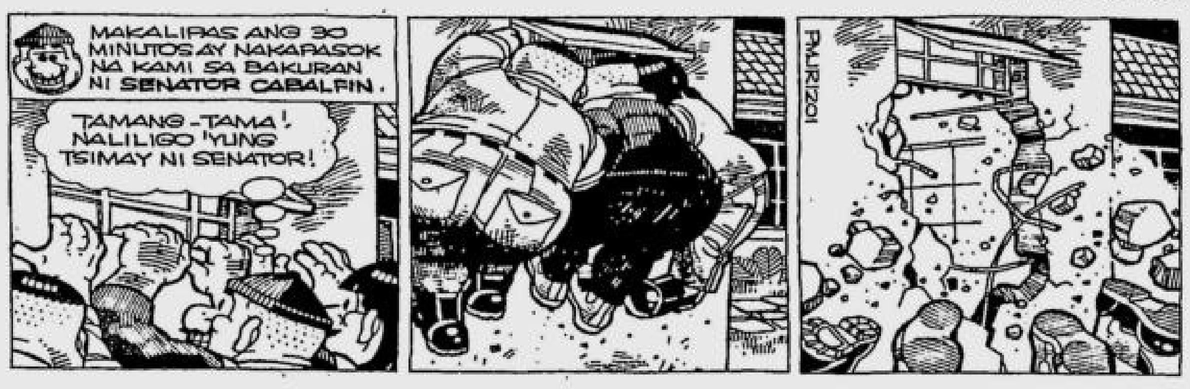
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


HANDA NA AKO!
SA ISASAMPANG IMPEACHMENT SA'YO?
HINDI
SA SUSUNOD KONG BIYAHE SA US.!

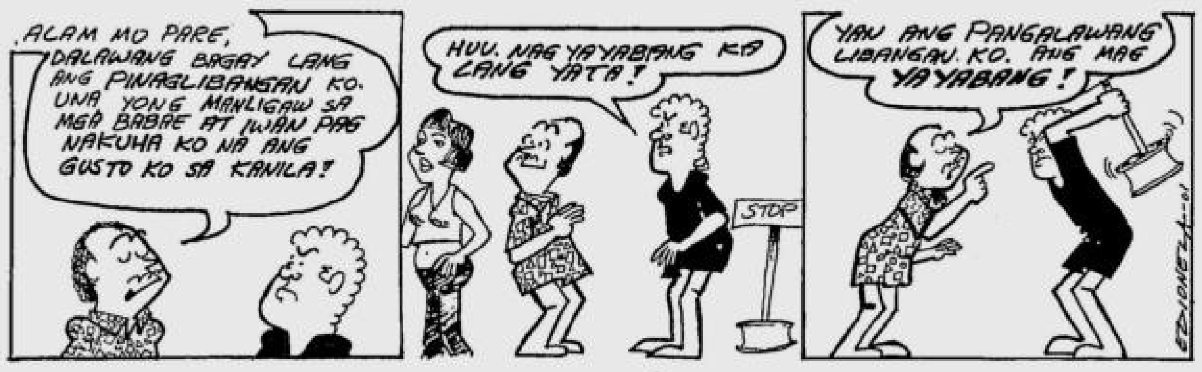
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


MAKALIPAS ANG 30 MINUTOS AY NAKAPASOK NA KAMI SA BAKURAN NI SENATOR CABALFIN.
TAMANG-TAMA! NALILIGO 'YUNG TSIMAY NI SENATOR!
PMJR1201

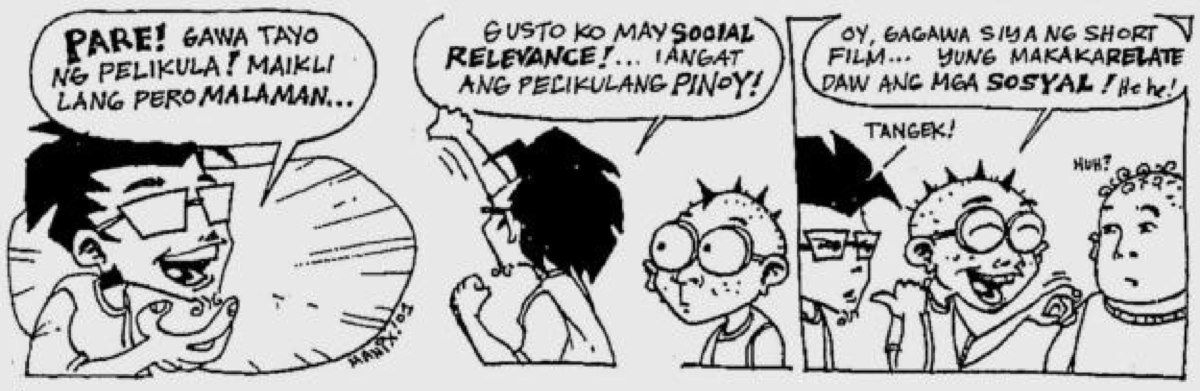
SIMO

BY EDGAR DIONELA


ALAM MO PARE, DALAWANG BAGAY LANG ANG PINAGLILIBANGAN KO. UNA YONG MANLIGAW SA MGA BABAE AT IWAN PAG NAKUHA KO NA ANG GUSTO KO SA KANILA!
HUU. NAG YAYABANG KA LANG YATA!
STOP
YAN ANG PANGALAWANG LIBANGAN. KO. ANG MAG YAYABANG!
EDIONELA

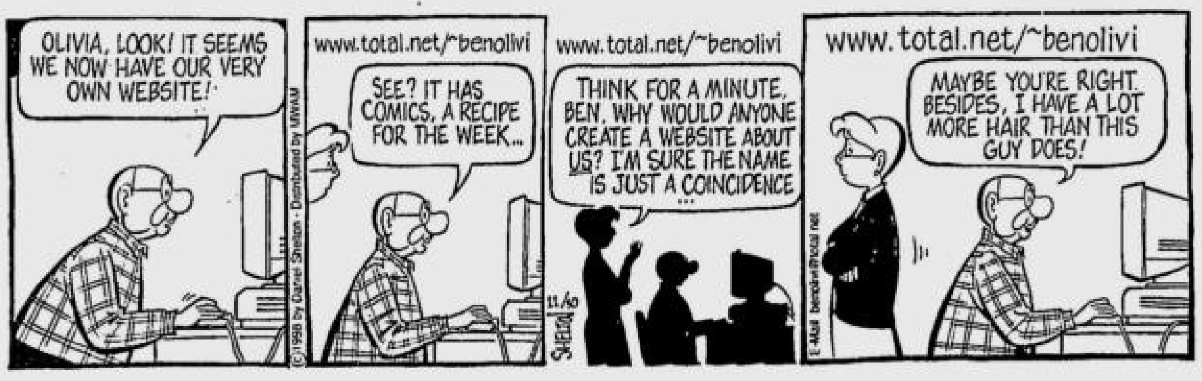
GARAPATA BLOOD

BY JOHN PAUL/BENG/MANIX


PARE! GAWA TAYO NG PELIKULA! MAIKLI LANG PERO MALAMAN...
GUSTO KO MAY SOCIAL RELEVANCE!... IANGAT ANG PELIKULANG PINOY!
OY, GAGAWA SIYA NG SHORT FILM... YUNG MAKAKARELATE DAW ANG MGA SOSYAL! He he!
TANGEK!
HUH?
MANIX '01

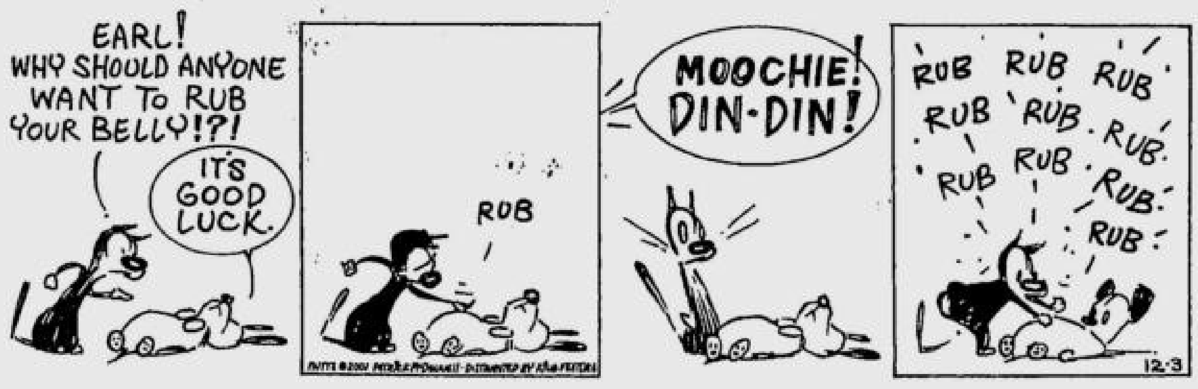
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


OLIVIA, LOOK! IT SEEMS WE NOW HAVE OUR VERY OWN WEBSITE!
www.total.net/~benolivi
SEE? IT HAS COMICS, A RECIPE FOR THE WEEK...
www.total.net/~benolivi
THINK FOR A MINUTE, BEN. WHY WOULD ANYONE CREATE A WEBSITE ABOUT US? I'M SURE THE NAME IS JUST A COINCIDENCE...
www.total.net/~benolivi
MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT. BESIDES, I HAVE A LOT MORE HAIR THAN THIS GUY DOES!
SHELTON

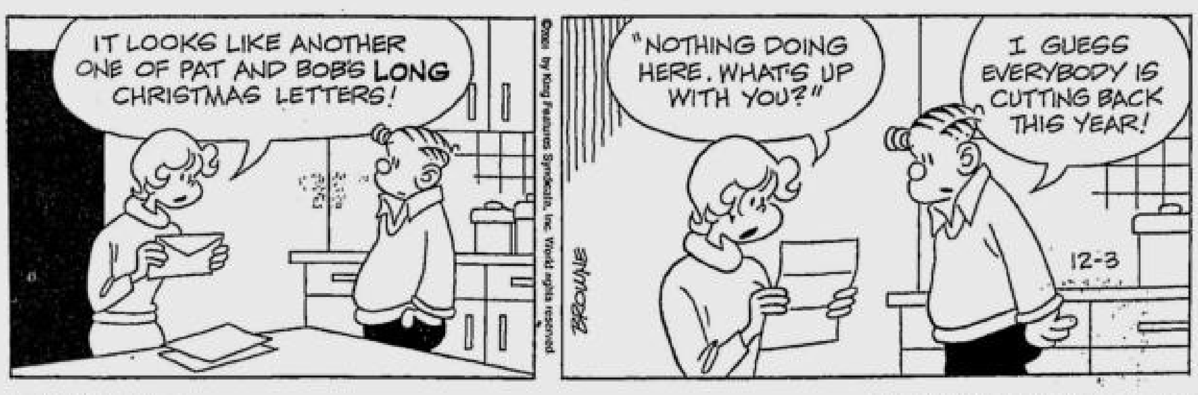
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


EARL! WHY SHOULD ANYONE WANT TO RUB YOUR BELLY!?!
IT'S GOOD LUCK.
RUB
MOOCHIE! DIN-DIN!
RUB RUB RUB RUB RUB RUB RUB RUB RUB RUB
12-3

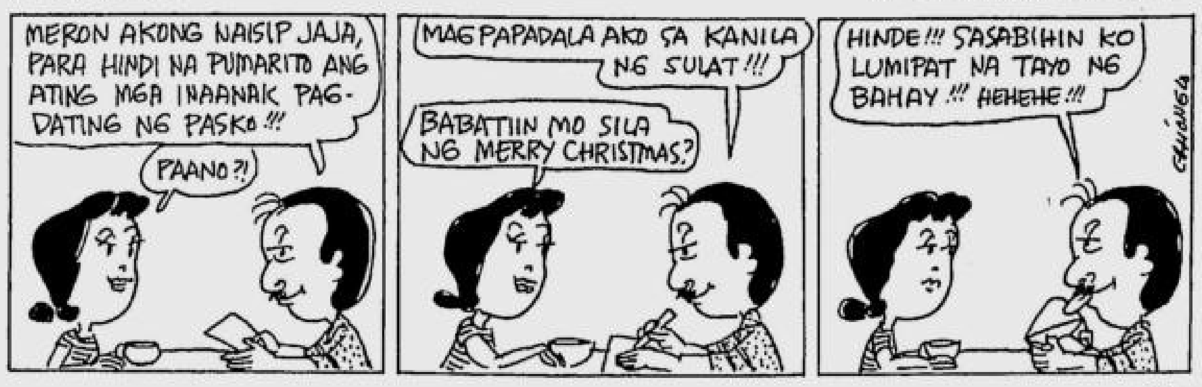
HI AND LOIS

BY BRIAN & GREG WALKER


IT LOOKS LIKE ANOTHER ONE OF PAT AND BOB'S LONG CHRISTMAS LETTERS!
"NOTHING DOING HERE. WHAT'S UP WITH YOU?"
I GUESS EVERYBODY IS CUTTING BACK THIS YEAR!
12-3
BROWNE

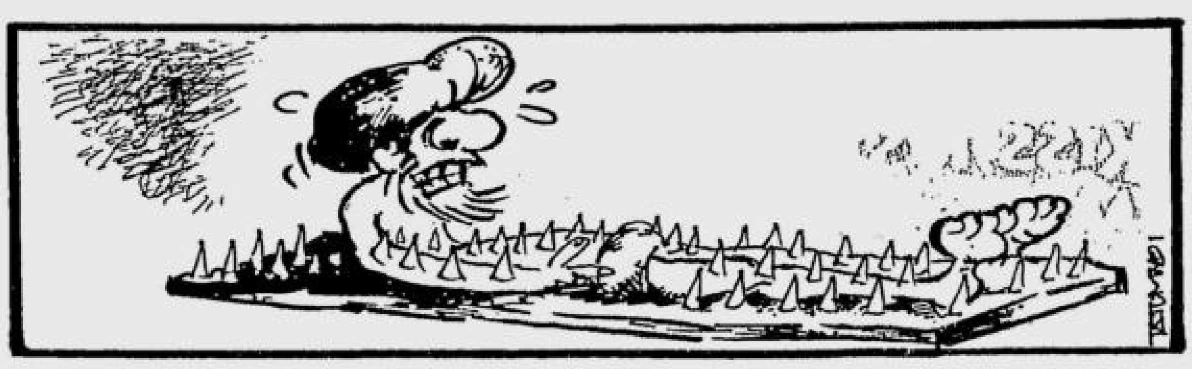
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

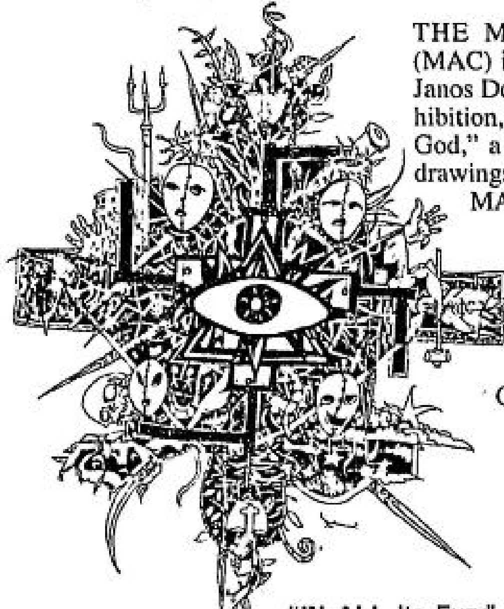

MERON AKONG NAISIP JAJA, PARA HINDI NA PUMARITO ANG ATING MGA INAANAK PAG-DATING NG PASKO!!!
PAANO?!
MAG PAPADALA AKO SA KANILA NG SULAT!!!
BABATIIN MO SILA NG MERRY CHRISTMAS?
HINDE!!! SASABIHIN KO LUMIPAT NA TAYO NG BAHAY!!! HEHEHE!!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU & TATUM MILAMBILING



'Olympian' teenage artist at Madrigal Art Center



"IN ALL Its Fury"

THE MADRIGAL Art Center (MAC) in Ayala Alabang presents Janos Delacruz in his first solo exhibition, "Olympus: The House of God," a collection of pen and ink drawings, Dec. 4 to Jan. 30, at the MAC Gallery.

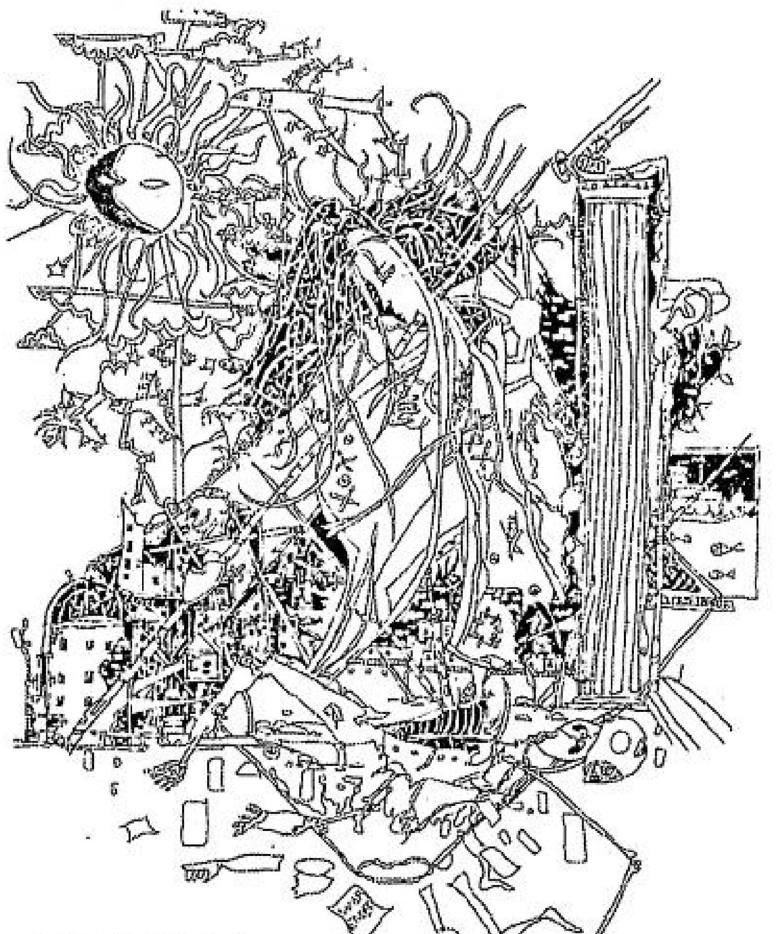
Olympus is Janos' other nickname (his full name is Jan Olympus Salvador Delacruz). Only 16 years old and a student at St. Benedict's College, Janos has been avidly documenting his experiences through the written word and drawn images. The pages of his journals are like a series of mini-collages of prose and illustrations recreating day-to-day activities with emotions replete with the idealism and confusion of a young man.

His collection of pen and ink drawings clutter his room and extends to the studio of his artist-father, noted painter-printmaker Fil Delacruz. Imagining himself as the hero, Janos' image stands at the core of his drawings—ruthless, messianic, gentle, romantic, funny, daring yet shy. His muse stands in splendor yet far from his recall.

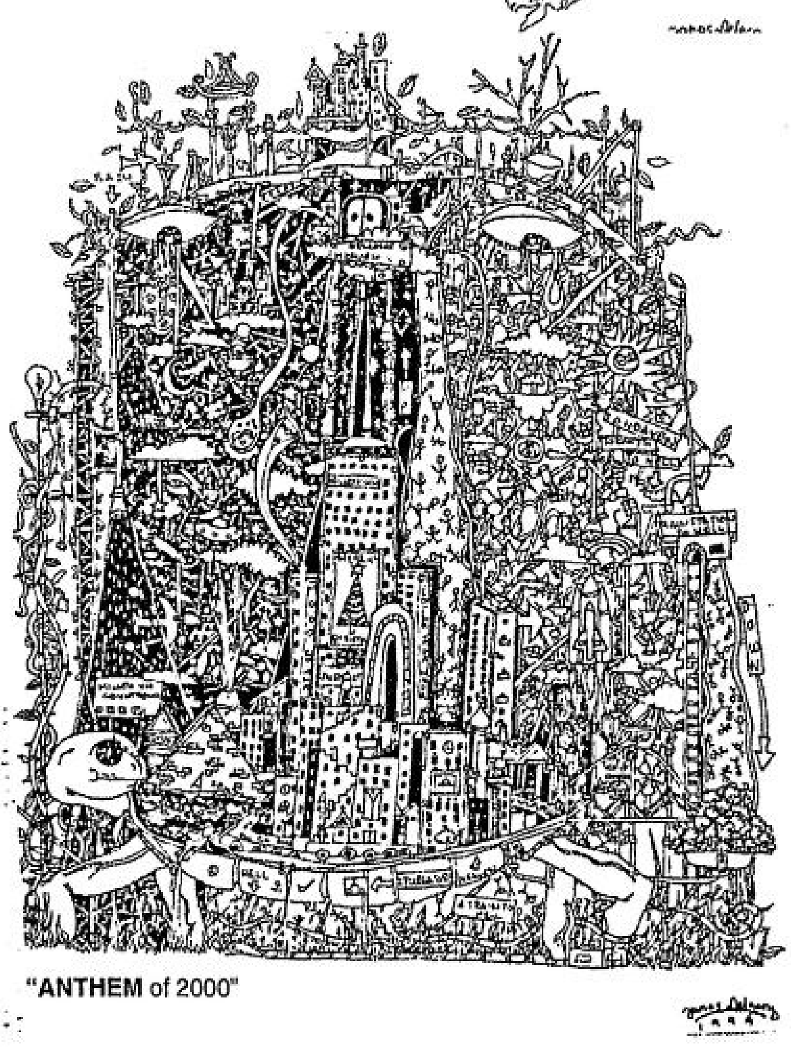
Daily events conspire to present satirical documentaries of the confusing adult world where he feels hemmed in, yet one which offers him redemption from the madness within. After all, for a young man, the safety and comfort of a strong support system like a happy home offers him refuge from the fears and uncertainties of the real world. He will eventually find his niche and his art will trail alongside his exciting journey. Meanwhile, Janos rides the crest of a never-ending discovery of truth and love mirrored in his powerful black and white images.

MAC is located at the basement of the Madrigal Center, Commerce corner Museum Drive (beside the St. Jerome Church, near the Alabang Town Center), Ayala Alabang, Muntinlupa. Gallery hours are from 10 a.m.-6 p.m., Tuesday to Saturday. Call 842-0127.

JANOS Delacruz, drawing prodigy



"MOTHERLAND"



"ANTHEM of 2000"

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Co, Jesus
De Guzman, Maryann
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Jamorabon, Zoraida
Maniquez, Sherill
Molina, Romeo
Tolledo, Salve
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12 23 41 43 45
06 07 11 34 46
07 17 21 42 49
09 11 22 33 46
15 16 18 39 41
04 24 29 30 32
03 05 08 16 44
06 27 29 31 39

₱25,000
09 19 26 43 47
01 04 19 24 48

₱100,000
02 13 14 22 31
10 17 42 44 48

INSTANT MILYONARYO AT IBA PANG GRAND DRAW WINNERS

₱1,000,000
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₱500,000
10 13 14 15 26

₱100,000
05 23 27 35 40

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Educating tomorrow's film audience

By Constantino C. Tejero

PINOY Magic Lantern, the film club whose concept originated in Switzerland and was brought to the country by actress Evelyn Vargas-Knaebel, is launching the Cinemagic Youth Film Week.

This is the club's latest project promoting film appreciation among Filipino children. Presented by the City Council of Manila, the Department of Education, Culture and Sports and Belco Marketing, Cinemagic runs Dec. 7-11 at Cinema 2 of Movieworld in Robinsons Ermita.

Aside from the regular fare of mostly shorts and animation the club has been touring in Metro Manila and the provinces, it is screening new films from Austria, Belgium, North Korea, Iran, the Philippines, some of them live action and full-length features.

"We want to show that children's movies go beyond the animé and cartoons," Councilor Kim Atienza says during lunch at Bayview Park Hotel.

In fact, three of the more interesting features to be screened are live action.

"MAN of Steel"

"Man of Steel," by Vincent Bal, is an 85-minute coming-of-age Belgian film about 13-year-old Victor, who's desperately seeking his first kiss. When that kiss comes too close, the boy becomes the Man of Steel, who has no emotions, because tears make him rust. But no Man of Steel can withstand Fania, a 13-year-old girl...

Lesson imparted

"Batang Trapo," by Mes de Guzman, is a 15-minute short about two siblings who sell rags and wipe windshields of passing vehicles on busy thoroughfares. The rôles are performed by real-life street children. This film has been chosen as the Philippine entry for competition in the short-film category at next year's Fribourg International Film Festival.

"Choori," by Javad Ardakani, is an 84-minute film about 5-year-old Zahra. The girl buys a chick. But while she is playing, the chick's leg breaks. Despite her parents' disapproval, she decides to take care of the chick.

Like many such Iranian films, it only seems that this is a movie for children, but it also speaks articulately to the adults, particularly parents.

"CHOORI"

And as articulated by the filmmaker himself, the message is: "Life is incomparable. Since it is too valuable, no one can set a price for it. It does not matter whose life we are talking about: a president or his horse, a chick or its owner. 'Choori' is depicting this statement: 'Life, life, life and nothing but...' "

It is such lesson Pinoy Magic Lantern executive director Vargas-Knaebel wishes could be imparted to the new generation.

Atienza relates how he would go around during barangay fiestas, and expresses shock at the existence of mini casinos where children would throw bets and get chicks for prizes. (Another material for a film!)

Sense of cinema

When Atienza presents the idea of a mobile theater, or a theater in the open, which will bring quality films to remote barangays for free, Vargas-Knaebel registers excitement and relief. This spells another achievement for her budding organization.

Now on its third year, the film club has a membership of 5,949 students in San Juan (where it was launched), Manila and Puerto Princesa. Recently it has extended its membership from children aged 6-12 years to youth 13-18 years old.

It conducts film tours, screenings and workshops. "Viewed by around 21,000 Filipino children, the club's activities continue to help raise their consciousness toward a sense of cinema."

We enjoin all media and the whole of civil society then to help this worthwhile project. Make a move, take a step, lend a hand—instead of forever lamenting the death of the Philippine film industry, or lambasting Filipino movies as *basura*.

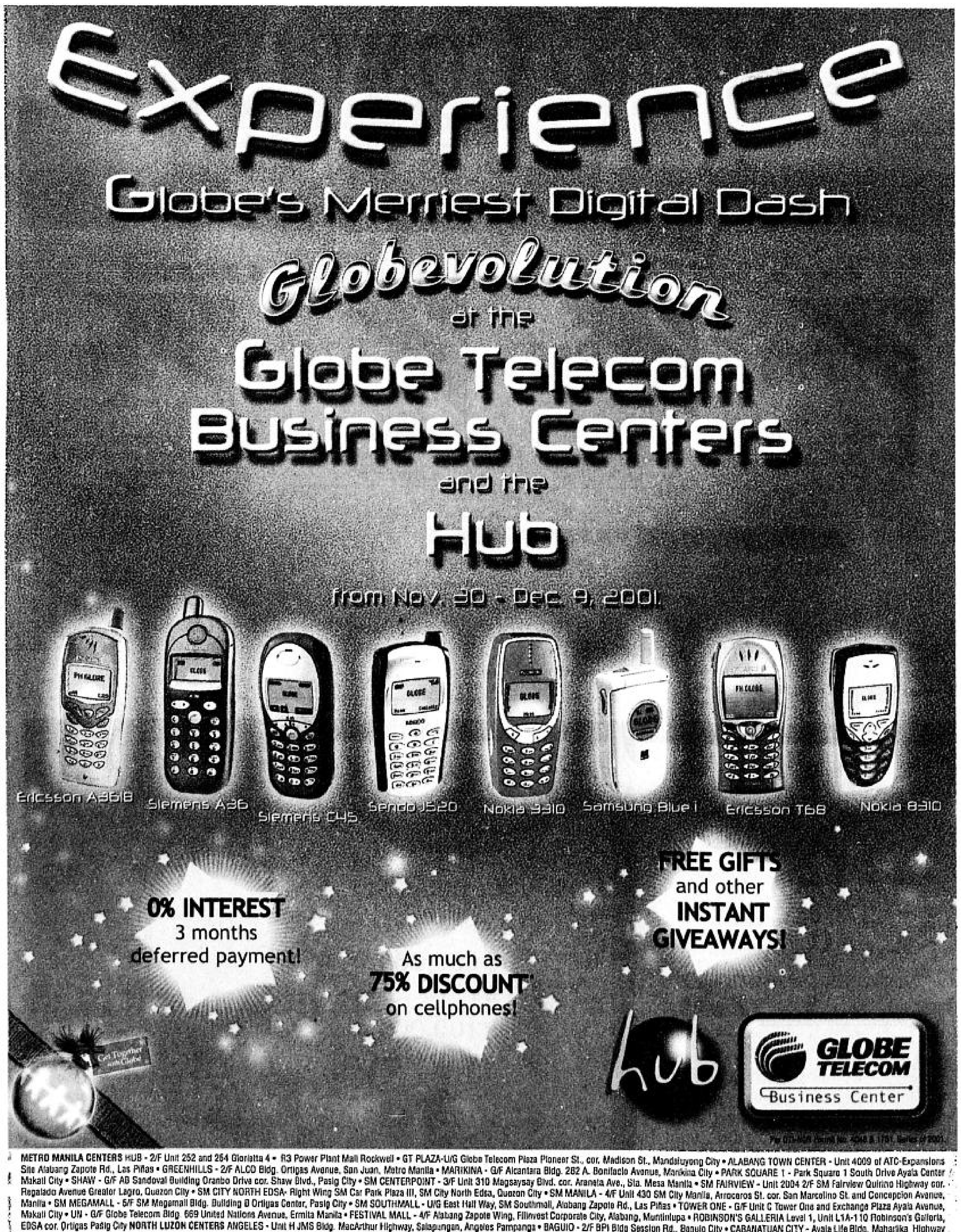
Because the solution is somewhere here—in this film club's aim to "contribute to the upbringing and education of tomorrow's film audience, casting a critical eye on image and sound, and encourage the youth toward a better and deeper appreciation of their own values and cinematic heritage and the social relevance and message that film imparts."

French expert to talk on art and building restoration

THE COLLEGE of Architecture of the University of Santo Tomas, with the Philippines-France Professional Organization and Palafox and Associates, is sponsoring a discussion on "French Technology on Art and Building Restoration" Dec. 6, 10 a.m.-12 nn, at the Albertus Magnus Auditorium, 4/F Education Building, University of Santo Tomas.

Resource person is Yves Bozelec, architect DPLG and member of the highly respected Architectes Voyer de la Ville de Paris, an institution whose origins can be traced to King Louis XIV. Paris-based Bozelec will be in the country for a week. He will also make a presentation to the country's top CEOs, LGU officials and art restoration enthusiasts in the morning of Dec. 4 at the Kalayaan Sunset Lounge of Urban Bank Plaza. He will likewise be visiting Intramuros and other old historic structures during his stay. Bozelec hopes to provide some useful insights, enlightenment and inspiration that could prove invaluable toward the presentation of the country's old and historic structures.

Learning institutions that wish to send their faculty and students to the presentation on Dec. 6 may contact the office of Dean Augusto M. Concio of the UST College of Architecture. Students who wish to participate will have to present their ID at the entrance. Call Edith at 724-6115 or 894-0074.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COLUMNIST Rikki Jimenez (in black) cuts the ribbon at the opening of "Pagbabalik Tanaw," an art show by the Quezon-based group Guhit at Ukit ng Sining. Also in photo are Sariaya, Quezon, Mayor Virgilio Villapando (left), Puchette Hernandez (third from left), Eophi CEO Richard Lim (in striped blue shirt) and Jowell Gaela (right).

Group show in Sariaya, Quezon

THE QUEZON-BASED artists' group Guhit at Ukit ng Sining (Gusi) held recently its group show, "Pagbabalik-Tanaw," at The Clubhouse of Woodlane Estates in Sariaya, Quezon. Participating artists included Puchette Hernandez, Ronald Cortez, Michael Ibardelosa, Jowell Gaela, Tony Permalino, Arden Deza and Efren Nantes.

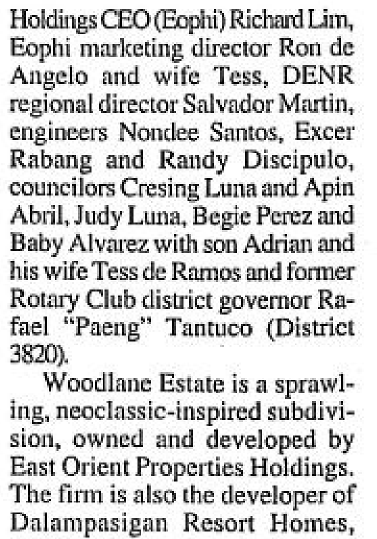
Most of the featured art pieces showcased glimpses of day-to-day life in Quezon. Gusi was formed to raise the awareness and appreciation of the people of Quezon toward the arts. It also provides opportunities for exhibitions for its members, who are all self-taught.

Cortez's works were genre pieces depicting scenes from everyday life. Permalino's pastels showed his bias for portraiture, while Gaela again betrays his fascination with old Spanish houses and churches.

Deza showed rural scenes and pastoral images. Abstractionist Nantes, who won first prize in the Shell National Students Arts Competition in 1995, explored Cubism in his works.

Hernandez showed romantic pieces on innocence.

The exhibit was opened by newspaper columnist and designer Rikki Jimenez. Guests included Sariaya, Quezon, Mayor Virgilio Villapando, East Orient Properties Holdings CEO (Eophi) Richard Lim, Eophi marketing director Ron de Angelo and wife Tess, DENR regional director Salvador Martin, engineers Nondee Santos, Excer Rabang and Randy Discipulo, councilors Cresing Luna and Apin Abril, Judy Luna, Begie Perez and Baby Alvarez with son Adrian and his wife Tess de Ramos and former Rotary Club district governor Rafael "Paeng" Tantuco (District 3820).


PUCHETTE Hernandez with some of her paintings

Woodlane Estate is a sprawling, neoclassic-inspired subdivision, owned and developed by East Orient Properties Holdings. The firm is also the developer of Dalampasigan Resort Homes, which is located on the Sariaya coastline.

Workshop on arts and crafts for fun and profit

ARTLIFE Enterprises, a school and supplier of art and crafts materials owned and operated by artist Victor Bella, is proud to open a new schedule for weekend art courses. The schedules of "Arts Inspiration Series for Fun, Gift-Giving and Profit" can be accessed at www.geocities.com/victor_bella/schedule.html. For work samples, visit www.geocities.com/victor_bella.

Group courses include Artistic Candle-Making with Decorative Mold-Making, Decorative Painting on Glass Metal and Ceramics, Acrylic Painting on Canvas, Flower Sculpture, Figurine-Making and Decorative Silicone Rubber Mold-Making.

Tutorial programs are also offered.

Victor Bella is a graduate of fine arts at the Maastricht Academy of Visual Arts.

Call 890-3778 or (0917) 757-6690, 10 a.m.-12 nn and 1-5 p.m., Mondays to Fridays. All visitations are strictly by appointment. Lessons are held at 30 Polaris St., Bel-Air, Makati.

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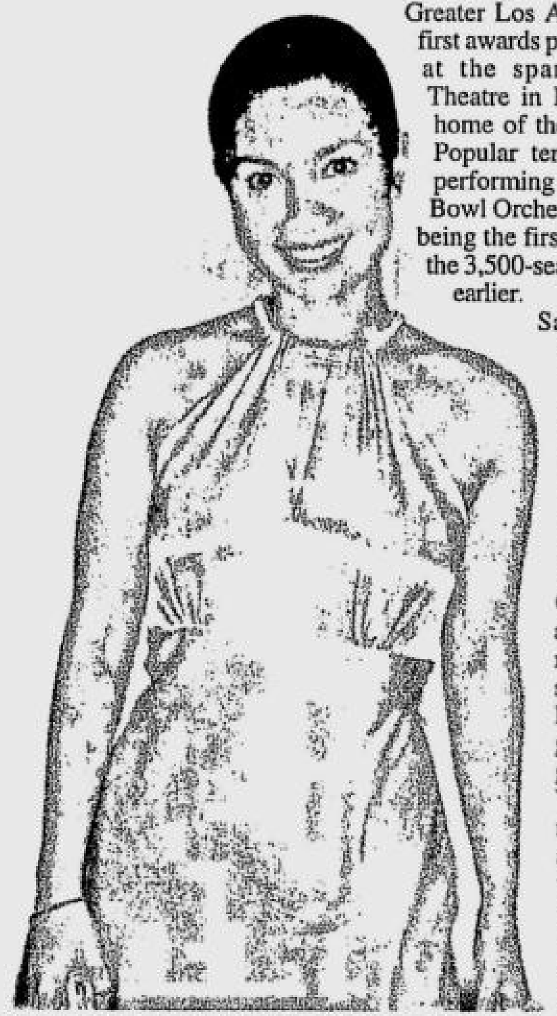
EXCLUSIVE

Lea Salonga hosts L.A.'s biggest theater awards show

Fresh from her successful stint in the restaging of 'Flower Drum Song,' the Filipino actress gets cozy with the L.A.-Hollywood theater community

By Ruben V. Nepales
Contributor

LOS ANGELES—It was a night of firsts. It was Lea Salonga's first time to host an awards show and it was not just any awards ceremony. Salonga recently presided over the Ovation Awards, Los Angeles' biggest theater awards event.



THE AWARD show hostess in a fetching gown

The show honoring the best in theater in the Greater Los Angeles area was the first awards presentation to be held at the spanking new Kodak Theatre in Hollywood, the new home of the Academy Awards. Popular tenor Russell Watson, performing with the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra, had the honor of being the first talent to perform at the 3,500-seat theater three nights earlier.

Salonga's cohost for the night, in which "The Lion King" ran away with seven awards, was Bruce Vilanch, who has written for what is known as the Quadruple Crown of awards shows—Oscar, Emmy, Tony and Grammy. The pair made quite an unusual sight onstage—Salonga, slim and elegant in a fetching gown, and the hefty Vilanch, with his crazy mass of blonde hair and shirt screaming with Edvard Munch's "The Scream." Vilanch, with his outrageous wit, would have described himself and Salonga as "Beauty and the Beast." The BMG Records artist later changed into another gown to sing "The Next Time It Happens," one of her applause-winning songs in "Flower Drum Song."

The poised Salonga was the perfect foil to the

LEA/ p.F2

SALONGA singing a song from "Flower Drum Song"

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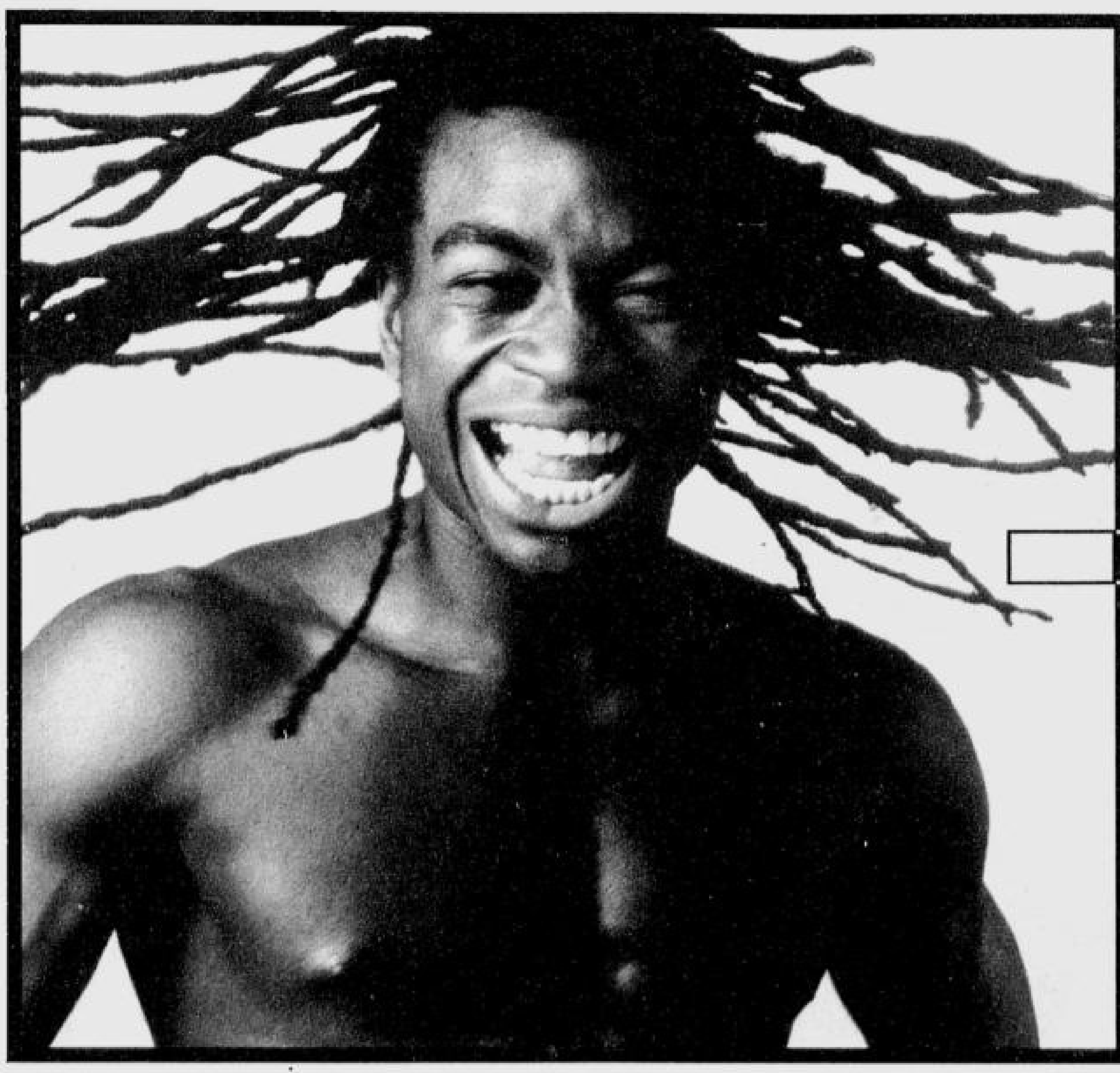

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ALEC Mapa and Christa Jackson

Lea Salonga hosts L.A.'s biggest theater awards show

(From page F1)

funny Vilanch, who is the subject of "Get Bruce!," a documentary that was an audience favorite at the Sundance filmfest, head writer and occasional guest on the TV hit "Hollywood Squares" and author of "Bruce!," a compilation of his wicked, hilarious essays, stories and gags which Time magazine says show how this Emmy award-winning provocateur can be the "perp of some of the funniest, most famous, or notorious moments in recent show-biz history."

Laughing fits

Salonga couldn't help but break into laughing fits onstage at the often politically incorrect cracks—welcome commodity in these serious, too respectful times—of her onstage partner, who is openly gay. We asked Salonga later if any of Vilanch's quips made her blush. "Nothing really except maybe the joke about the Vienna Boys Choir being in the same dressing room as the Gay Men's Chorus, and the longest audition being Elton John auditioning the male slaves for 'Aida,' " she replied. Vilanch said during the show that the audition was still going on that very moment.

While Vilanch greeted the audience with, "I'm Linda Tripp" and that despite all the plastic surgeries "I'm still going to look like this," a jab at himself and at the similarly frizzy-haired presidential snitch who has undergone a makeover, award presenter Alec Mapa, a Filipino-American actor who starred in "M. Butterfly" on Broadway, said, "Hello, I'm Lea Salonga."

This was Mapa's joking introduction of himself in "I Remember Mapa," an acclaimed solo piece a few years ago in which he recounted growing up gay and Filipino in San Francisco and his seesaw-career (he went from taking over B.D. Wong in the plum role on David Henry Hwang's Tony-winning "M. Butterfly" to a pizza restaurant waiter—all in a matter of months).

It took Mapa to make a joke out of a persistent glitch in the Ovation Awards show: a slide of Salonga's hit musical, "Flower Drum Song," kept appearing on a giant video screen onstage. Mapa quipped, "I have nothing to do with the subliminal advertising for 'Flower Drum Song.' " By coincidence, one of the actor's most hilarious segments in "I Remember Mapa" was when he mimicked Juanita Hall, an African-American actress, portraying a Chinese woman in the 1961 film version of "Flower." Just picture that. (We are still hoping that someone will bring "I Remember Mapa" to Manila—this show and the talents of Mapa should be shared with Filipinos.)

Boyfriend

Earlier, at the lobby, we asked the actor who has also appeared in movies (most memorably as a drag queen with Dennis Quaid in "Playing by Heart") and TV ("NYPD Blue," "Some of My Best Friends") who he was cheering for among the nominees. Mapa, whose cousin is the father of Manila actor Jao Mapa, answered, "I'm rooting for everybody because it's so wonderful that L.A. is starting to acknowledge theater actors in this way. We're kind of low in the totem pole in the Hollywood food chain so it's nice for us to have our own night."

Salonga also enjoyed preshow moments at the lobby with her new boyfriend, Robert Chien, an Asian-American of Chinese and Japanese heritage. She and the Filipino-looking Chien, dapper in a tux, made an attractive couple on the lobby. The Tony-winning actress met Chien, an executive at Provicint, a leading provider of high-tech customer contact services, through his cousin, Christine Yasunaga, who is in the "Flower Drum Song" ensemble.

Asked about her thoughts as she finishes her much-lauded performance on "Flower Drum

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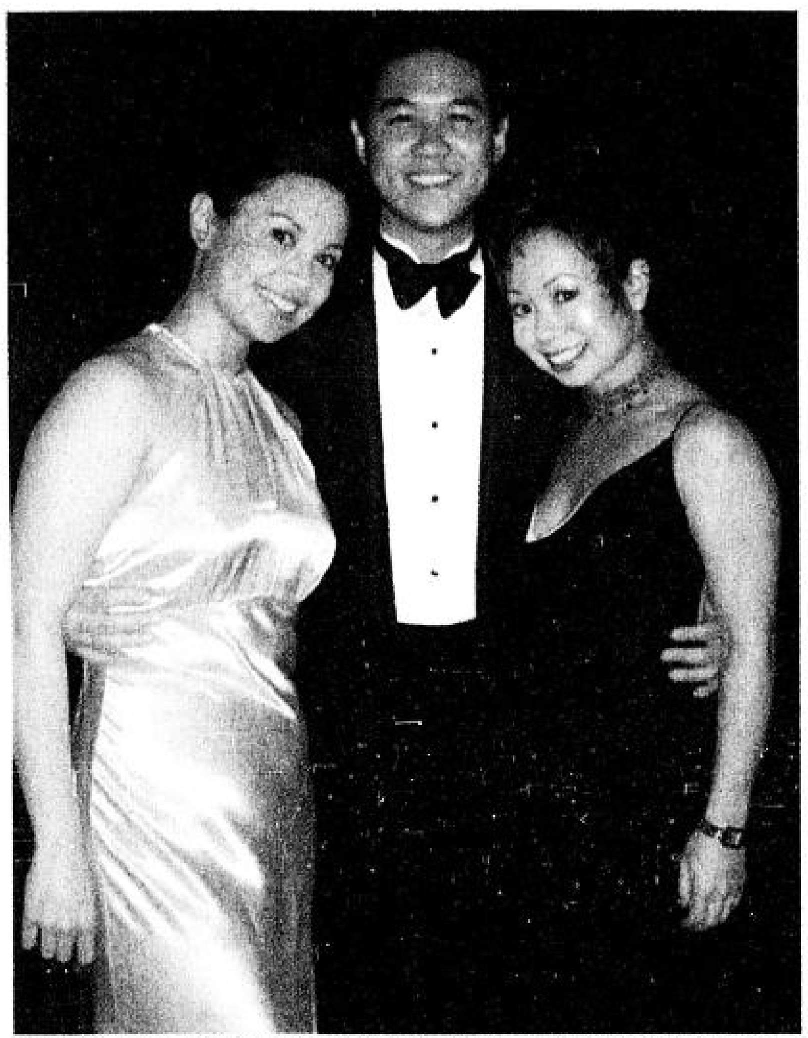
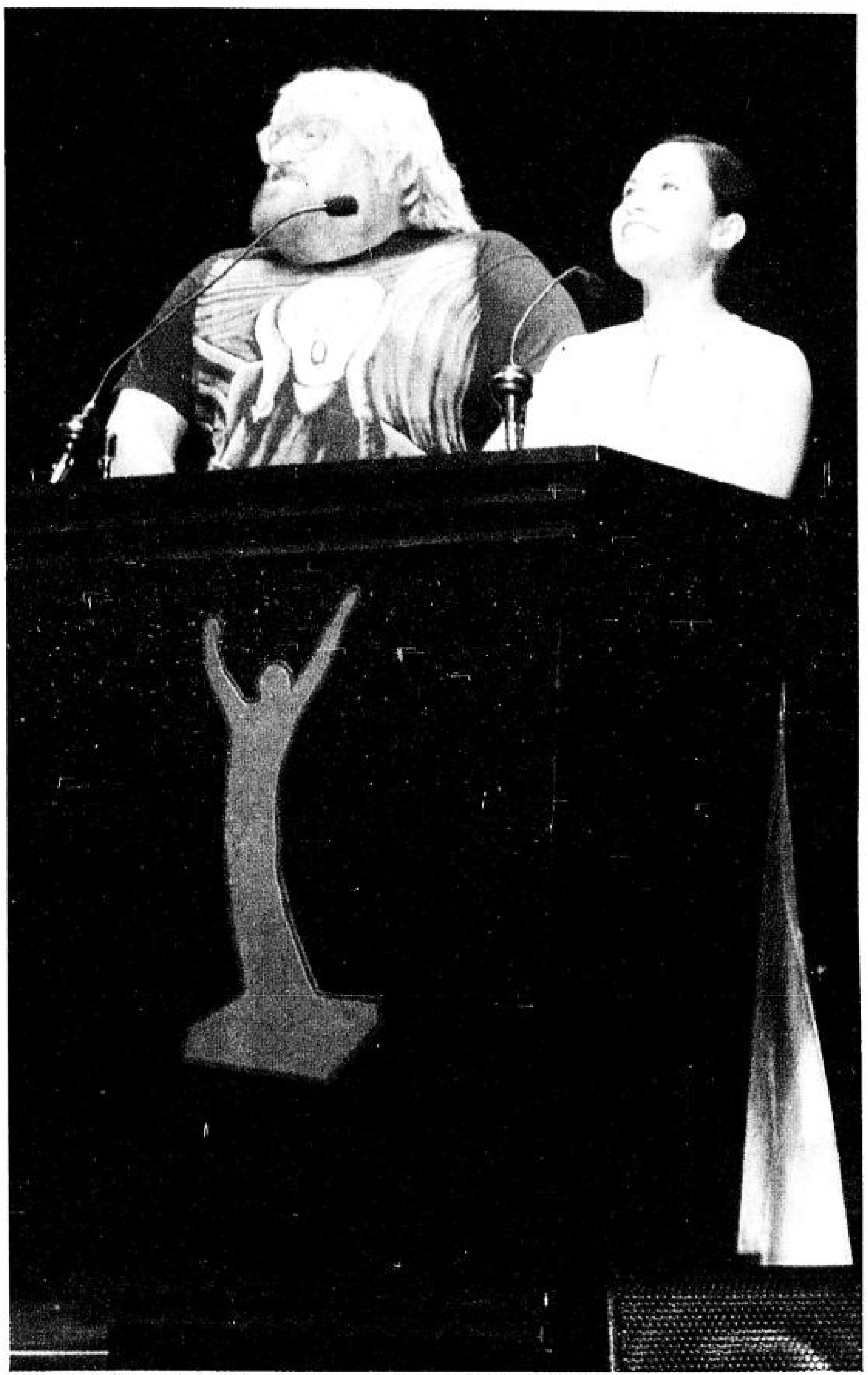
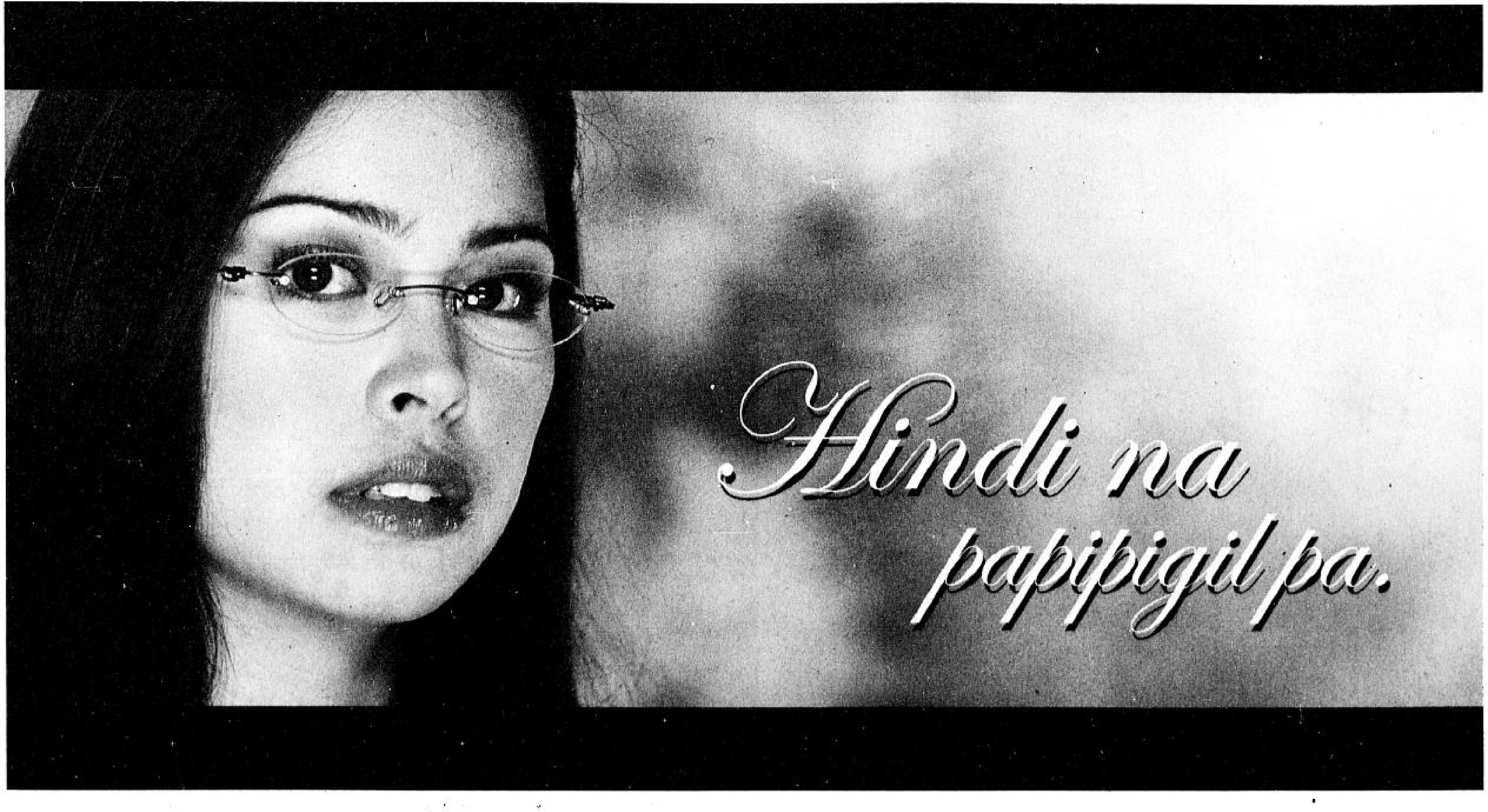

LEA Salonga with boyfriend Robert Chien and actress Christine Yasunaga

PATRICK Cassidy


HILARIOUS and not so politically correct Bruce Vilanch is cohost.



Lea Salonga hosts L.A.'s biggest theater awards show

(From page F2)

Song" (the show has been extended by popular demand to Jan. 13 with Filipino-American Jennifer Paz, also a former "Miss Saigon," taking over the Mei-Li role), Salonga responded, "My thoughts? Numerous—that I'm going to miss a lot of the people that I've had the great honor and pleasure of working with; that I feel 'honored to have worked with such an incredible creative and production team on this show; that the audiences here in L.A. have been so wonderful in their response to 'Flower Drum'; and that I'm going to miss L.A. when I leave for Manila, but I'm happy that I'll be back after my stay there."

Salonga also announced that she was taping a guest role for the Christmas episode of the TV series, "E.R." Los Angeles seems to be a perfect fit for Salonga personally and professionally. At next year's Ovation Awards, she may figure prominently again—this time as a nominee for best lead actress in a musical for "Flower Drum Song."

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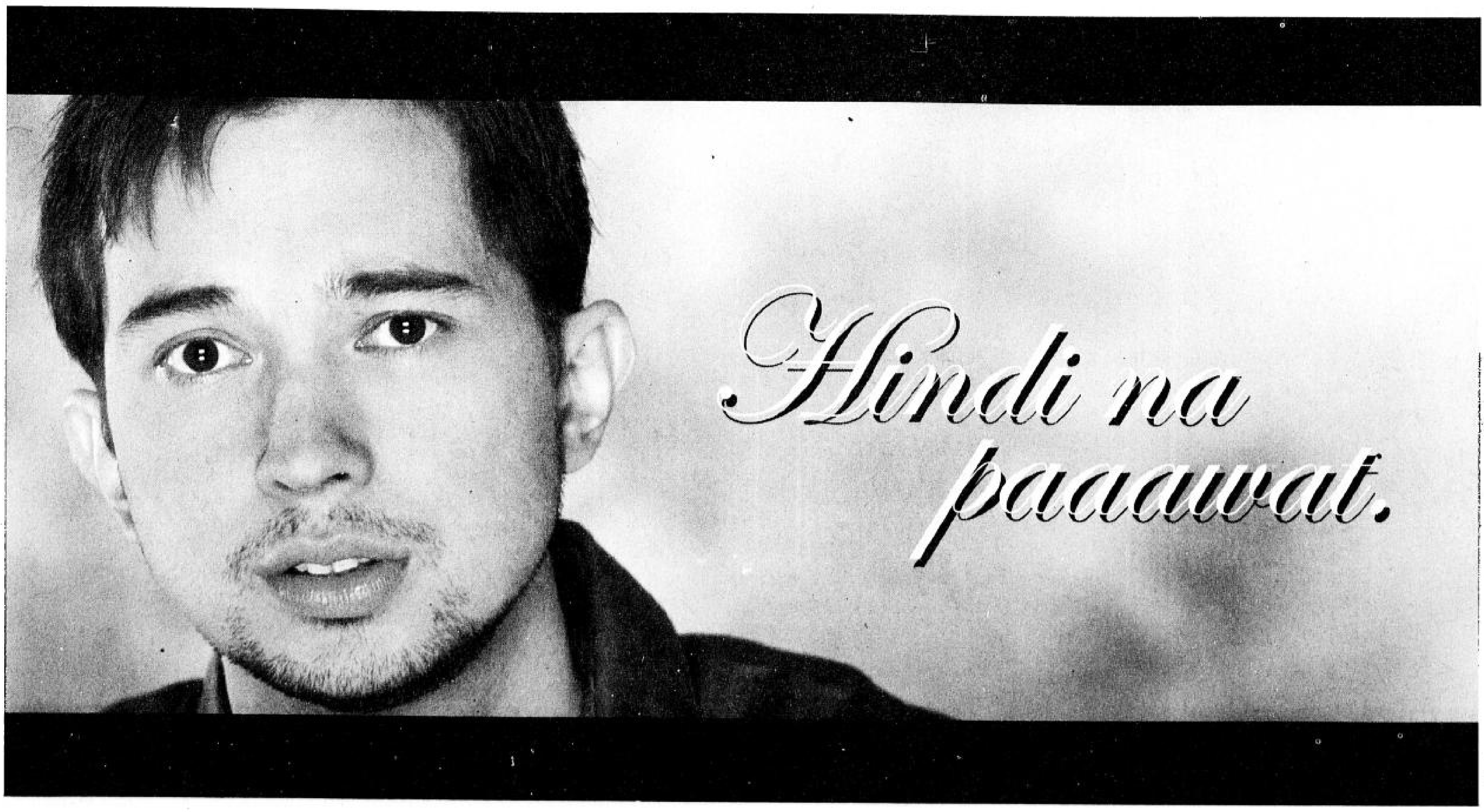

Hindi na paaawat.

Gilopez Kabayao and family to perform at FEU Auditorium

THE FAR Eastern University President's Committee on Culture will present the Gilopez Kabayao family in a concert of foreign and local compositions for violin and piano on Dec. 4 at the FEU Auditorium, 10:40 a.m. and 1:40 p.m.

Gilopez Kabayao and wife Corazon Pineda, together with their equally gifted children, have performed with tremendous success in different parts of the world. Gilopez made his debut at age 19 at New York City's Carnegie Hall, and merited countless honors and distinctions like the Magsaysay Award for public service and a Doctor of Humanities, honoris causa, from the University of the Philippines.

Holder of a Bachelor of Music, magna cum laude, from the University of Santo Tomas Conservatory of Music, Corazon was twice a winner of the Manila Symphony Young People's Competition. She was a soloist of the Manila Symphony Orchestra. Sicilienne Pineda Kabayao, 23, has won competitions in voice and violin at the National Music Competition for Young Artists. Farida, 20, a concertist at 3½ years old, has played violin and piano, and is a singer and a stage performer. Gilberto, 14, the youngest of the Kabayao children, took piano and voice lessons at 3. He also has had acting stints for the stage.

FROM LEFT, Gilberto, Farida, Corazon, Sicilliene and Gilopez

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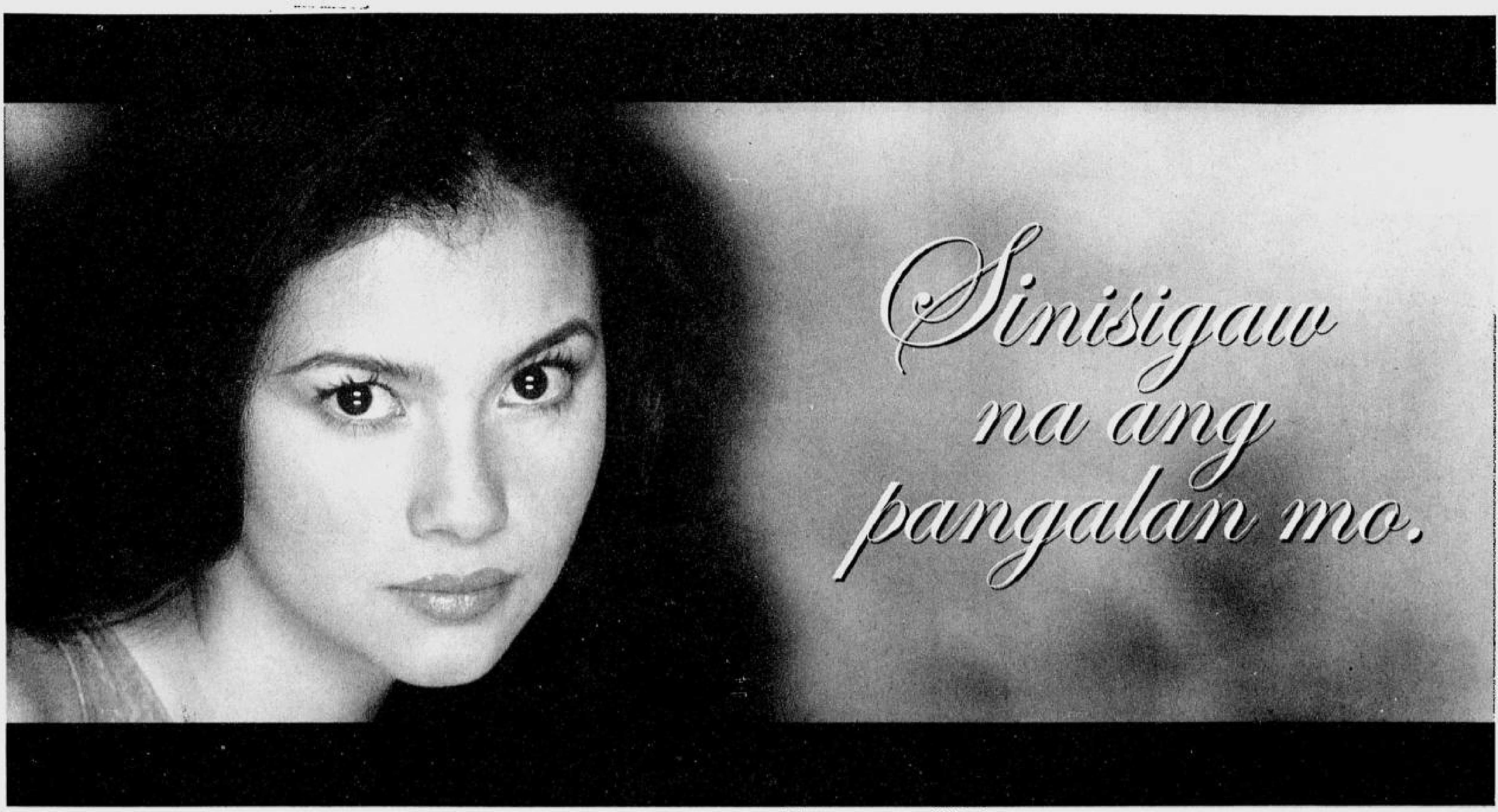


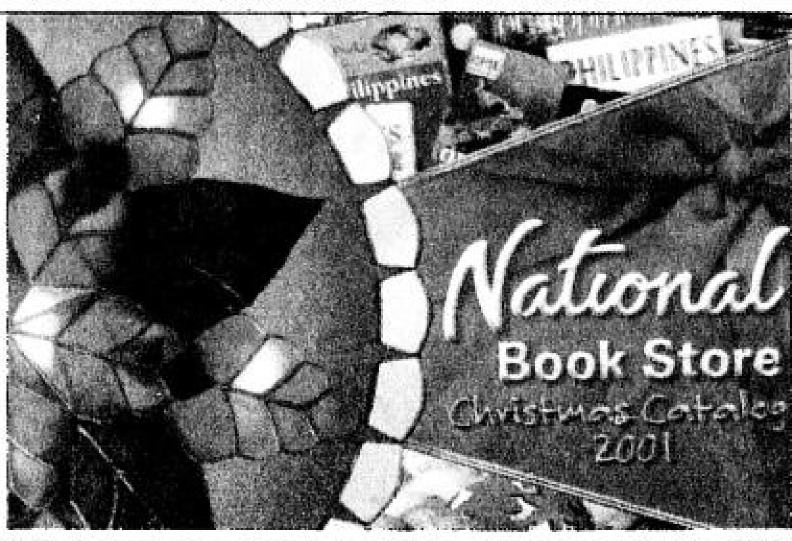
Radioactive Sago Project's Lourd de Veyra to lecture on poetry as performance

WRITER and musician Lourd de Veyra will talk on "Poetry as Spoken Art" in the continuation of the Associate Lecture Series of the UST Center for Creative Writing and Studies on Dec. 5, 3 p.m., at the center's conference room, 1/F St. Raymund's (AB-Commerce) building, UST campus, España, Manila.

De Veyra, leader of the cutting-edge band Radioactive Sago Project, host of the hit show "Halo-halo" on Studio 23, and junior writing associate of the University of Santo Tomas,' will talk about the performance dimension of literature.

Panelists are poet and performance artist Vim Nadera and poet and broadcast journalist Jim Libiran of the public affairs program "The Correspondents."

The public is invited. Slots are limited. Call 731-3101 local 8281.



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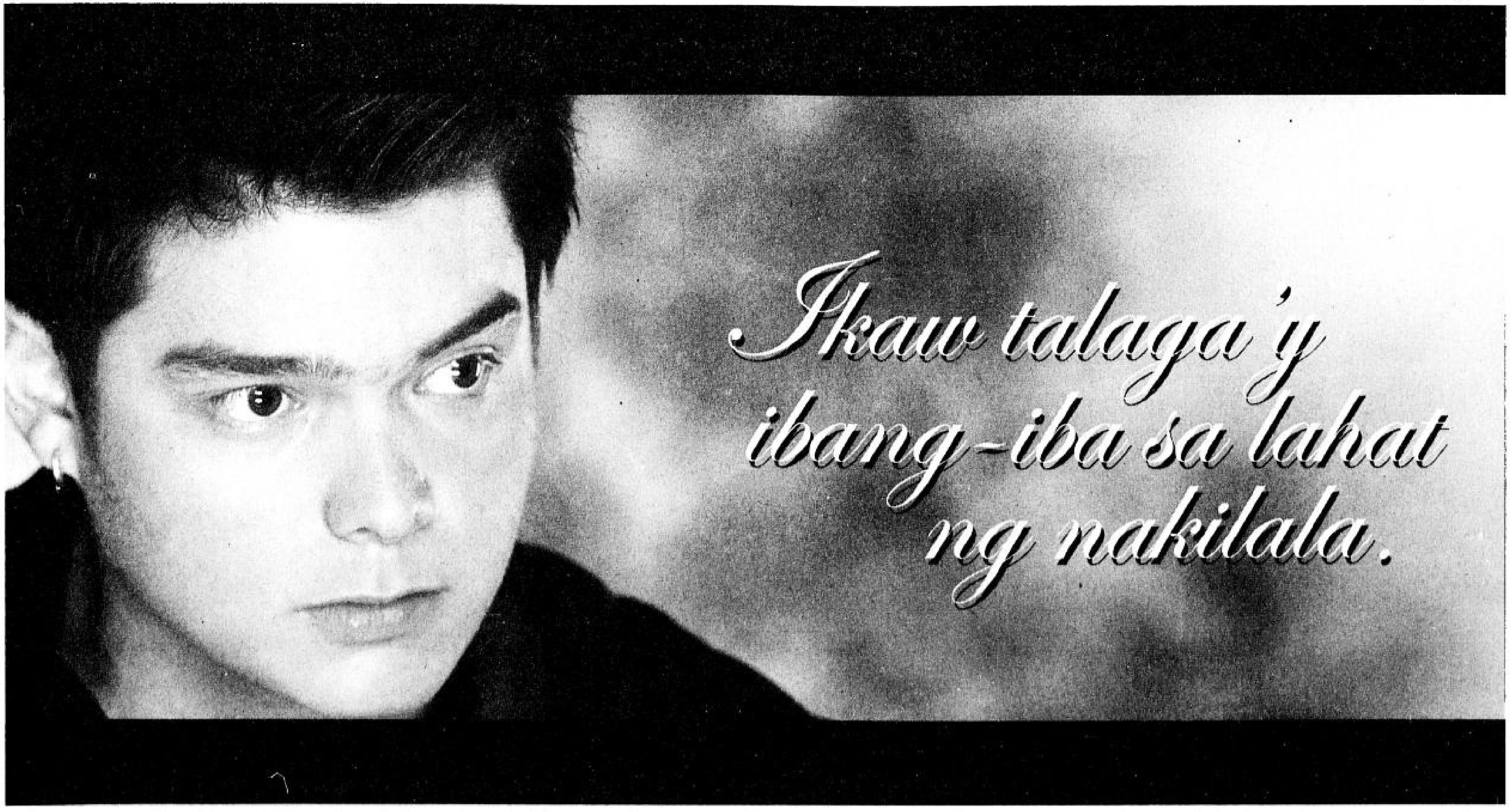


Keeping distinct the sheen of Maranao tales

Tales from Lake Lanao and Other Essays
By Nagasura T. Madale
National Commission for Culture and the Arts, 2001
120 pages

BY CHRISTINE GODINEZ-ORTEGA
Contributor

REVIEW

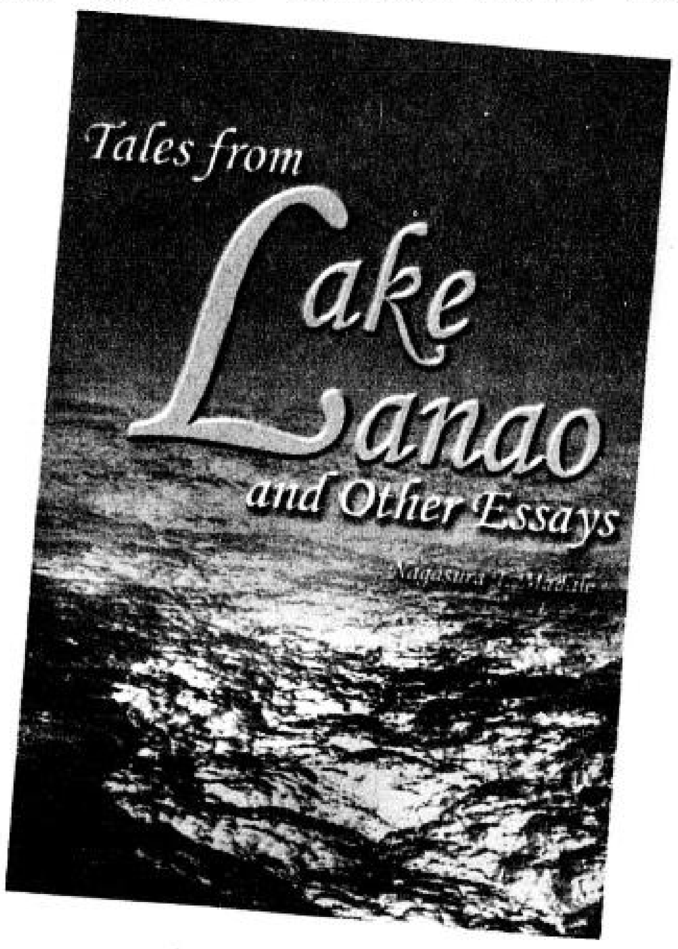
THE EYE-CATCHING title of this book by Nagasura T. Madale rests mainly on the word "tales." Etymologically, *tale* comes from the Anglo-Saxon word *talu*, meaning "speech." The word *tale* likewise has powerful connotations, for it promises "to tell" the reader about a fantastic world.

Yet the reader discovers that this book does not fully keep the promise of its title because the tales are few and are presented as samples of Maranao literature. Central to the book are the essays that educate him about Maranao literature, Muslim literature and their role in the development of the wisdom of the *ummah* (community).

And we understand Madale's aim in putting out this book. Aside from its becoming a part to the growing wealth of folk materials from Mindanao, the book draws attention to Madale as a scholar, who, more often than not, considers the tale an anthropological document.

In fact, the few tales such as "The Great Tataro (Caterpillar)," "Mother Earth" and "Sitti Maryam and Nabi Isa (The Virgin Mary and Jesus)" and the fables and legends are in their transcribed or "raw" fonns waiting to be re-told in the way Andersen, Perrault and the Brothers Grimm did for their own countries' folklore.

At the same time, we appreciate Madale's efforts to classify Maranao literature and Muslim literature into non-Islamic literature (the epic, *tutol* or stories) and the folk Islamic-inspired literature (*dekir*, *quiza*, *khutba*) for this is a basic requirement in the scientific study of the "exceptionally diverse tale," according to the linguist Vladimir Propp in his pioneering work "Morphology of the Folklore." More important, these literatures reveal traces of the history, customs and worldview of the Maranao many Filipinos are unfamiliar with. Under non-Islamic literature, Madale gives the synopses of 18 out of 25 chapters of the Darangen, the most popular epic of Mindanao. He also gives a brief summary of the circumstances of Radia Indarapatra's birth, among other information in the book's division of folk genres.



Lineage

Along these lines, Madale traces from a *salsilah* (genealogy) the religious lineage of the Maranaos to Sarip Kabungsuwan as well as their mythological lineage from Radia Indarapatra, who marries the characters in the Darangen. From these unions came the four heroes who escaped the "enchantment" of the fabled kingdom Bembaran and established the *pat a penampong ko ranao* or the four principalities of *ranao*, namely, Bayabao, Masiu, Unayan and Balo-i.

Madale claims the Maranaos believe that events in the Darangen actually happened. Maranao scholars have since tackled this blurring of myth and reality in explaining the basic aspects of Maranao society such as courtship, marriage, respect for elders, love of wealth and the importance of social prestige.

Madale's book opens with the symbolical story of "The Great Tataro" that enables us to understand its framework in the same way that we understand Scheherazade's need to survive for her country's women and for her sons by the very king who postponed signing her death warrant because he wanted to hear more of her tales to better appreciate the "One Thousand and One Nights."

Beneath the tale of *tataro* and its ability to survive to fulfill its destiny is the other universal theme of the celebration of all of Allah's creations in spite of physical, psychological and moral differences. But proceeding from the symbolical level without proper preparation could confuse the reader.

A general introduction would have been ideal for all the tales to avoid repetitive information in the different essays and the tales, in all its forms, can be allowed to stand on their own. After all, said the folklorist Jane Yolen, the tale has its own logic, its own vitality that eventually reminds us of our own humanity.

In "The Great Tataro," *tataro* is snatched by the eagle (later identified as a *garuda*, a huge man-eating bird in Maranao tales, in the essay "A Preliminary Classification of Muslim Literature in the Philippines"). When the eagle is about to eat *tataro*, she sings a beautiful song and the bird releases her only for her to land into the crocodile's mouth. Again she sings of nature's beauty and the individual's right to life and the crocodile lets her go. When the caterpillar metamorphoses into a butterfly, she flies about singing, "Alhamdolillah, Alhamdolillah" ("Praises to the Great God"), and to His creations, the eagle and the crocodile included.

Beautiful story

The book closes with the *kissa* (religious tale) of "Sitti Maryam," the Virgin Mary, and "Nabi Isa," or Jesus Christ, a prophet to the Muslims.

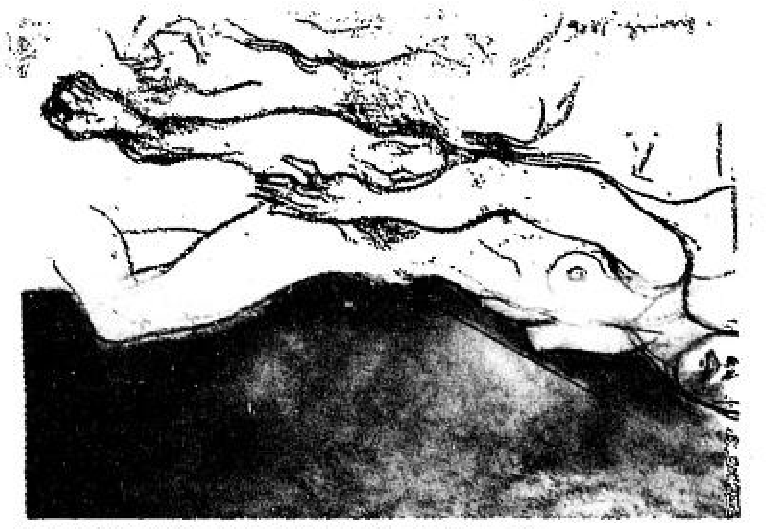
In this beautiful story, Jesus tells his mother not to let anybody inside the house while he is gathering firewood in the forest. As soon as Jesus leaves, the Angel of Death knocks on the door and insists on taking Mary's soul for her time is up. She pleads that since she has not said goodbye to her son properly, she should be allowed to sleep on the bed.

As she lies on the bed, the Angel of Death takes Mary's soul from her body "like a strand of hair from a bottle of oil." When Jesus returns and sees his mother asleep, he cooks their supper. But when he realizes his mother is dead, he prays to God that he talk to her once more. God grants this, and mother and son bid goodbye to each other.

The soul being likened to "a strand of hair" in "a bottle of oil" suggests a smooth and painless "removal" of the soul without opening the body. The strand of hair in a bottle of oil is also a common image in many Maranao tales whose setting is the Agamaniyog, a coconut-rich kingdom. In the light of the resurgence of Islam in these parts of the country, Madale should present similar tales to remind Christians and Muslims of their kinship through Abraham.

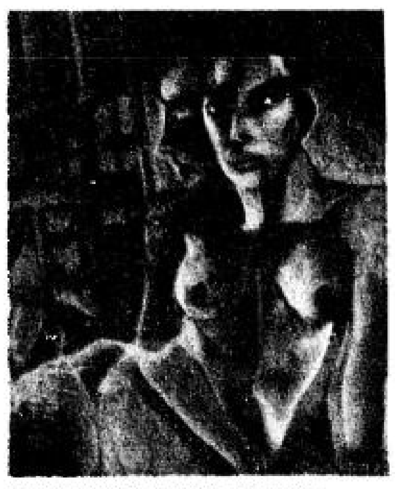
Beyond the essays and the few tales in this book, therefore Madale's message is for Filipinos to look on Maranao and the Muslim literatures as a unique part in the tapestry of Philippine literature.

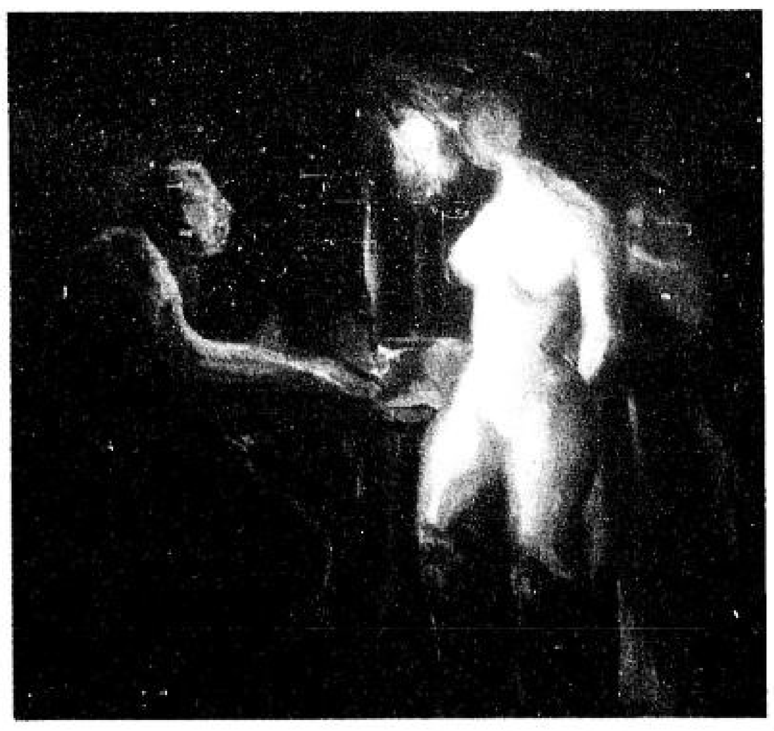
Tataro, symbol of the weak individual, had to think of ways to survive in order to fulfill its destiny just like the Maranao and Muslim literatures' need to survive because they have the ability to weave themselves into that tapestry of the country's other tales, although their threads and sheen must remain distinct.


ARTWORK (title unknown) by Marcel Antonio

The erotic in art and literature

"EROS Pinoy: An Anthology of Contemporary Erotica in Philippine Art and Poetry," the first-ever anthology of poetry and visual art on the theme of erotica, will be launched at 6 p.m. today at the Linden Suites on San Miguel Avenue, Ortigas Center.


"LOVERS" by Onib Olmedo


"TABLE No. 1 (Alibangbang Series)" by Danny Dalena

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The book, which comes in full color, hardbound and is 7"x11" in size, is truly a collectors' item and is now available at P850 per copy via the National Bookstore Christmas Catalog. Buyers of the book may simply call in their orders and arrange a specific pick-up date at any National Bookstore branch.

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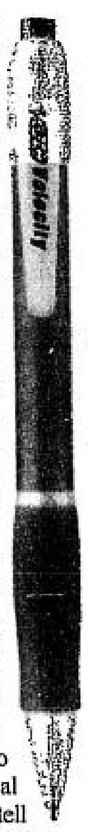
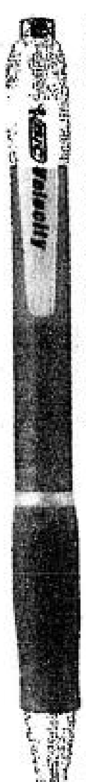
50 years and still writing





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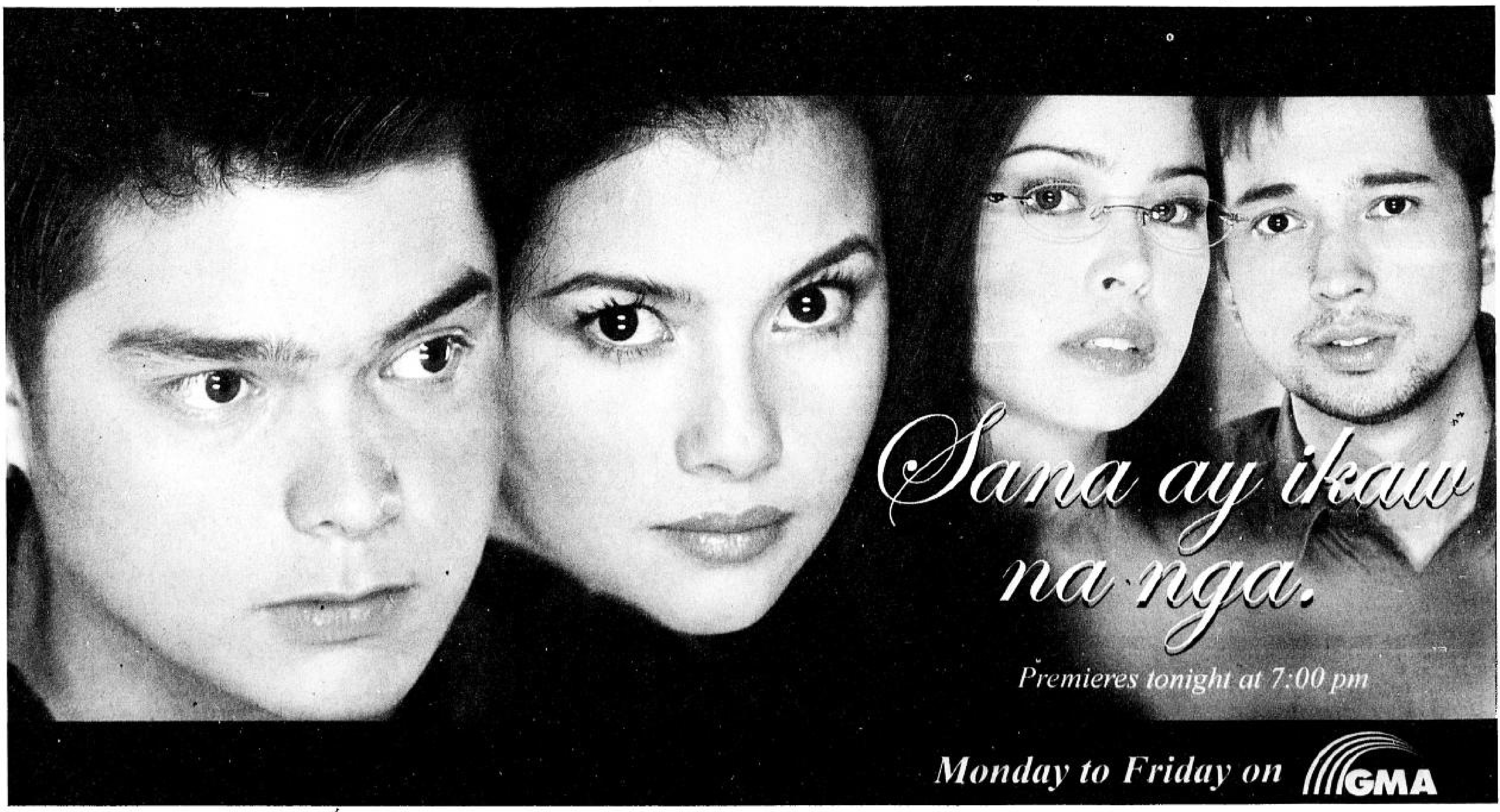
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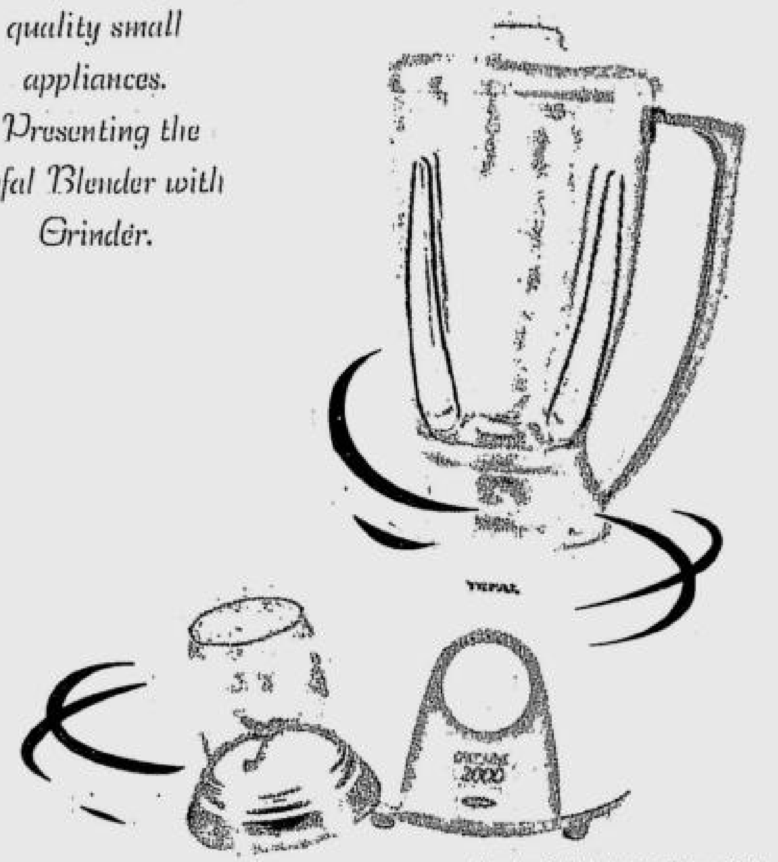

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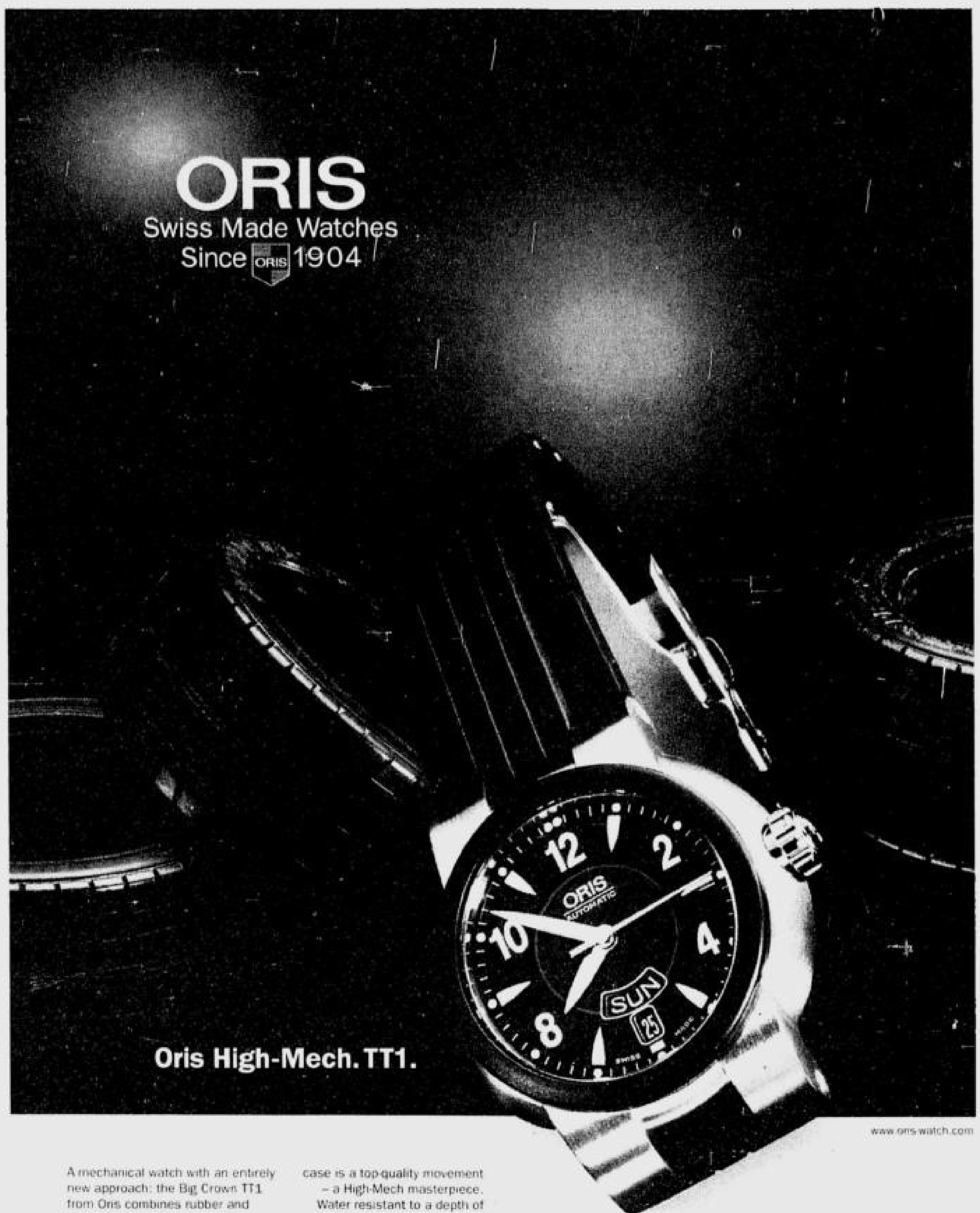

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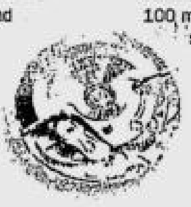

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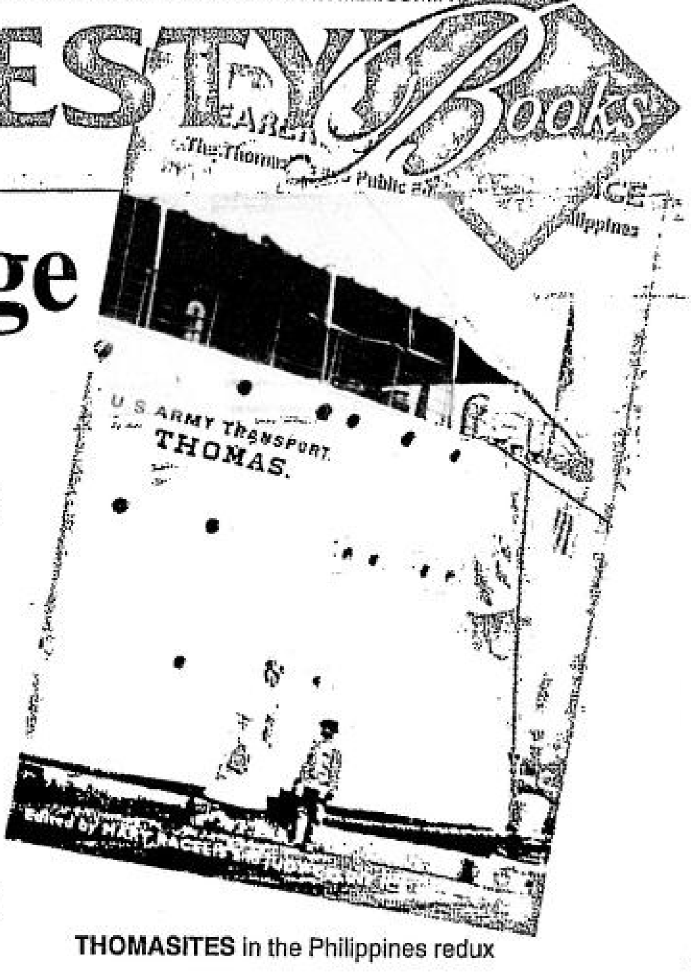
By Alex Y. Vergara

Anvil's anthology of recollections, letters and official documents focuses on the role and impact of Thomasites on Philippine education

A PARISH priest from Surigao, perhaps threatened by the competition posed by a newly opened public school on the future of his parochial school, branded the American teacher running the former as an instrument of the devil. In an attempt to dramatize his point, the priest led several townspeople one morning in exorcising the schoolroom. The poor *padre* unwit-

BEARERS/ p.G2



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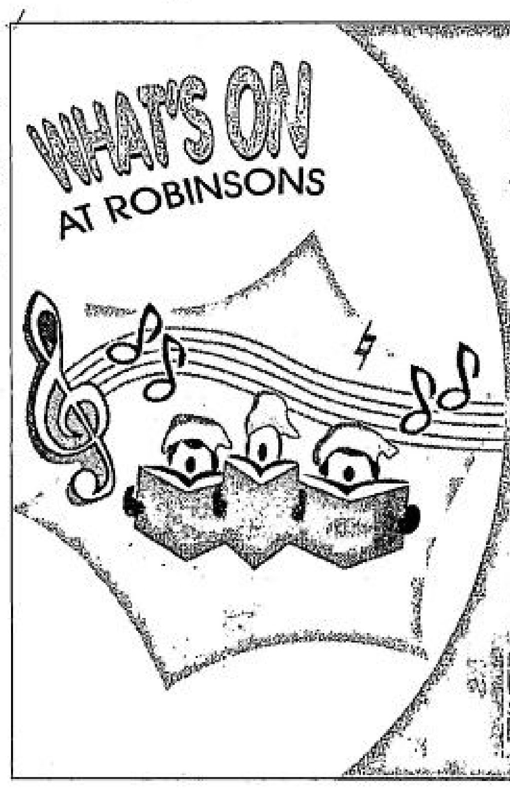
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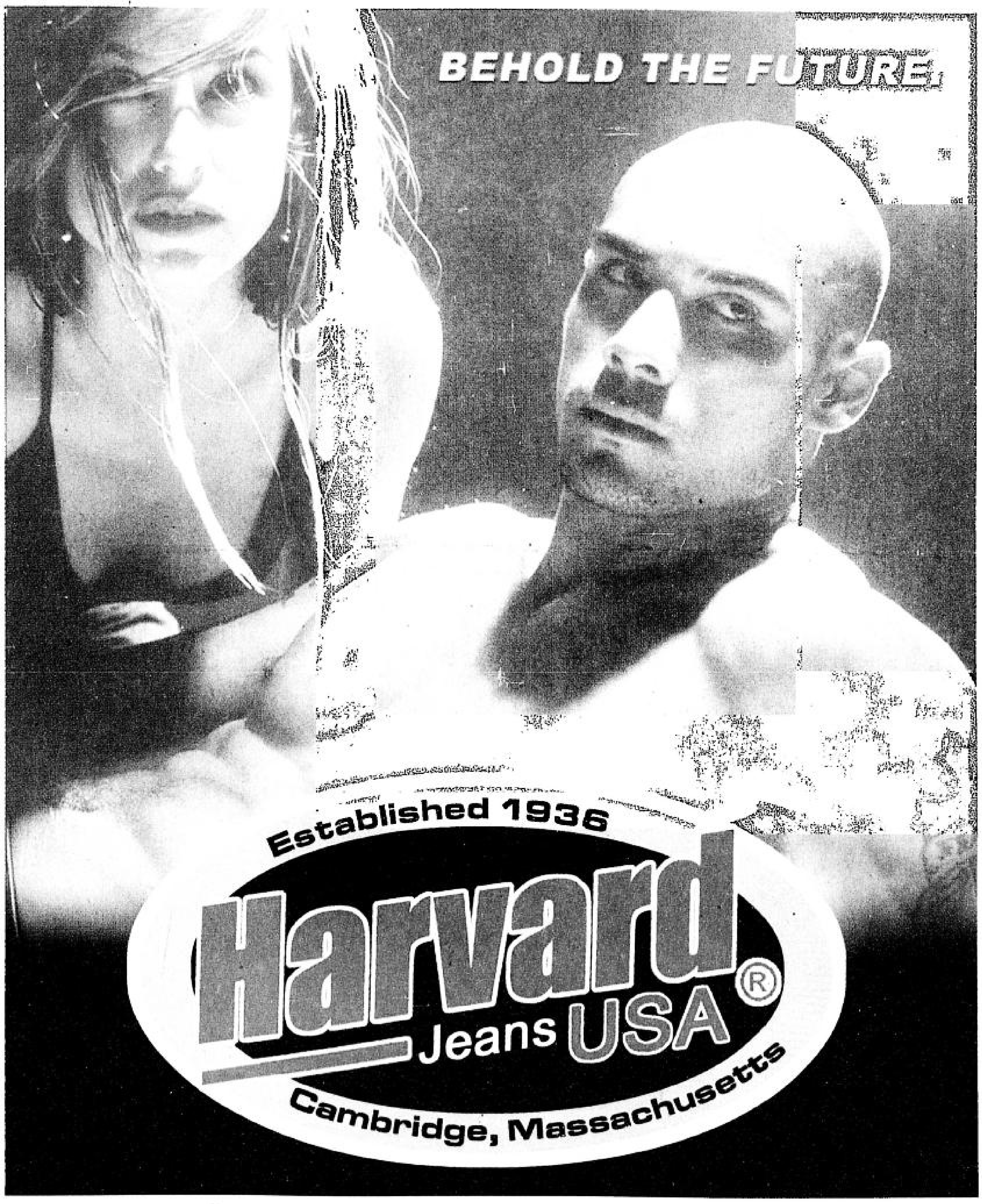
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Bearers of knowledge and friendship

(From page G1)

tingly hastened his own school's demise. Thinking that the public school was now free of demons, people lost no time enrolling their children to avail of free and arguably better education offered by the American.

A chapter in Philippine history has assumed a life of its own, thanks to flesh-and-bone stories of real people who lived and learned during the early American period. Although a bulk of the accounts was seen through the eyes of Americans, Filipinos, who were just beginning to learn a new language and vague ideas about democracy, provided instructive and amusing insights as well.

Anvil Publishing recently launched "Bearers of Benevolence: The Thomasites and Public Education in the Philippines." Edited by Filipino educators Mary Racelis and Judy Celine Ick, the 337-page volume is an anthology of recollections, eyewitness accounts, letters and official documents from American schoolteachers at the turn of the last century.

Racelis, director of the Ateneo de Manila-based Institute of Philippine Culture, wrote the introduction, while Ick, an associate professor of English and Comparative Literature at the University of the Philippines, Diliman, wrote the conclusion. The project received funding from the American Association of the Philippines."

The American teachers were collectively called Thomasites since they arrived in Manila from San Francisco via the U.S. Transport Thomas on Aug. 23, 1901. The moniker eventually came to include American educators and soldiers-turned-teachers who arrived before and after them. Filipinos viewed these pioneers, who laid the groundwork for a public school system in the country, with a mixture of reverence and suspicion. After having endured Spanish colonial rule for more than three centuries; many Filipinos view the Americans' arrival as nothing more than a change of colonial masters.

These Americans, in turn, braved a strange and hostile land for various reasons. Apart from the prospect of adventure and a decent-paying job, many were genuinely inspired to bring education to Filipinos as part of Uncle Sam's so-called benevolent assimilation. Never mind if they had to endure humid weather, meager resources and delayed salaries.

"As selections in this volume show," writes Ick in her conclusion, "the system suffered from inadequate facilities, the lack of books and school supplies, the difficulties of hiring qualified teachers and other such problems—problems that sound woefully familiar in Philippine public education today."

Not a few teachers burned with a missionary zeal to bring Christianity to a disparate archipelago only to learn later that most Filipinos were already Christians. Their varying facility with Spanish wasn't of much help either since only a small percentage of the population spoke their former colonizers' tongue. As gleaned from the teachers' letters, they learned from their students as well. They had no choice. Although women were sometimes assigned in pairs, most of the time the nearest American they could confer with was usually assigned several seas or mountains away.

Special place in community

"While American teachers were masters of the classroom," says Racelis, "they groped their way around the community. Filipinos came in many guises—student, neighbor, local official, priest, farmer, market vendor and many more." And, yes, friend. Therein lies the core of the relationship. Both eventually viewed each other as real people and not as slaves or masters out to put one over the other.

Teachers then occupied a special place in the community, and, thus, became regular fixtures during such occasions as weddings, birthday parties, fiestas, baptisms, even funerals. Whether

BEARERS/ p.G3

BRIDGING PAST AND PRESENT. Educators Judy Celine Ick and Mary Racelis look back on accounts of colleagues from a bygone era.

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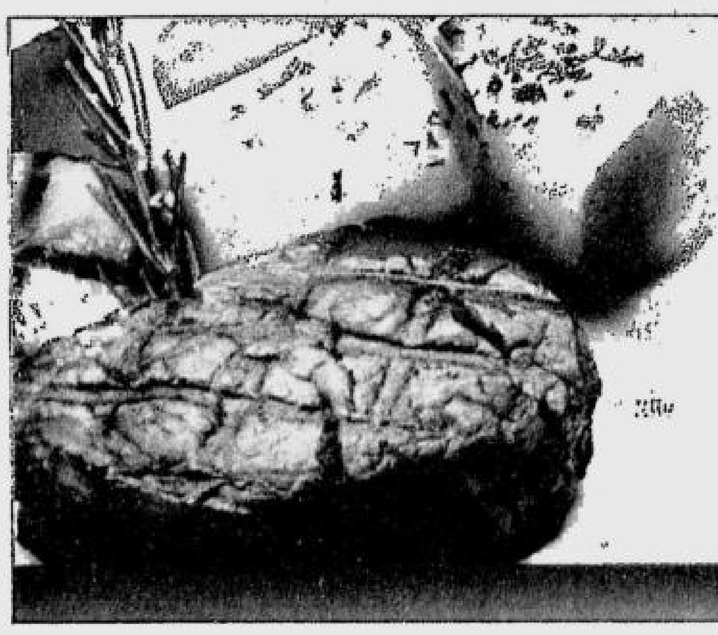
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Bearers of knowledge and friendship

(From page G2)

they liked it or not, such appearances came with the territory. If anything, the situation they were in underscored their direct interaction with Filipinos.

Mature readers would probably remember Racelis as the one who compiled and edited a similar volume titled "Tales of the American Teachers in the Philippines" in 1959. Then Sen. Geronima Pecson, herself an educator, wrote the introduction.

"As the Manila-born daughter of a Filipino father and an American mother," Racelis writes in her introduction, " I regarded the book (the older one) as part of my 'roots quest' around my mother's American heritage.

"...I soon realized that in their stories were reflected my own hybrid, mestiza Filipina, background, a personal microcosm perhaps applicable to Filipino children in classrooms all over the Philippines in the early 1900s."

Of course, as she adds in the introduction, Racelis didn't have the experience and wisdom an additional 42 years has brought. The new selection gave her additional insights into the role and impact of Thomasites on Philippine education. She also found it amusing to go through some of the letters by Filipino students to their teachers. Except, perhaps, for their stilted use of English nothing much has changed: then as now, Filipinos were generous in praising friends and superiors.

"We hardly changed a word," says Racelis, referring to the Filipinos' letters. "Many were quite sanguine, but as a whole they're very readable. If the letter was too stiff, we didn't use it. Otherwise, it would be too boring."

For her part, Ick, a Philippine history buff, has been fascinated with the Thomasites ever since she read Racelis' earlier book. Aside from doing extensive research at the UP library, Ick, as project director of Thomasites Centennial Project, traveled to various parts of the country, gathering insights from descendants of teachers or their students. A number of Thomasites fell in love with the Philippines and decided to call the islands their home. One of Ick's great-grandfathers was actually an American soldier who stayed here as well.

When she first came across "Tales," Ick felt like she had landed on "*terra incognita*." She writes in her conclusion: "Reared on the dogma of our 'mis-education' by American colonialism inculcated by my UP education, I never thought to examine the actual documents from that point of history. I simply trusted the received wisdom that American education was the evil that led to our 'colonial mentality,' which in turn, the root of all our society's failures. Case closed."

"... It was one thing to accept the stock generalizations about American colonial enterprise in the Philippines and quite another to be confronted by an American teacher's account of surmounting the oddities and difficulties of daily life in the Philippines."

Like the schoolroom in Surigao after the exorcism was performed 100 years ago, Ick continues, people were soon left with the *maestro* who was, after all, just a man.

E-mail the author at avergara@inquirer.com.ph

11th bookfair at UST

IT'S bargain galore at the 11th UST Annual Book and Novelty Fair on Dec. 3-7, 8 a. m.-5 p.m. daily, at the covered walk facing the UST Hospital (Ma. Guerrero and Quezon Drives). The fair is sponsored by the UST Publishing House.

Avail of the discounts and bargains on books, magazines, novelty items and food. If you're looking for perfect Christmas giveaways, come and visit the fair where you can find almost everything like a one-stop shop.

This year's participants include: Jesuit Communication, Goldmag, Peripatetic, WS Computer, Ageless Wisdom, Word of Joy, Topnotch Magazines, Norma Alcedo Bookshop, Booksale, Summit Publishing, Allscript Establishment, A-Z Direct Marketing, NP Taurus, Grolier Int'l., Happy Danes, Lampara Publishing House and Bookmark, Inc. For novelties and food products, Finger Magic, Alfred Reyes Gifts & Novelty, Isadora Creation, Little Sarah, Lai Fu, Ludy Manlangit Gifts and Dr. Lim's Chocolates, among others.

The fair is open to the public.

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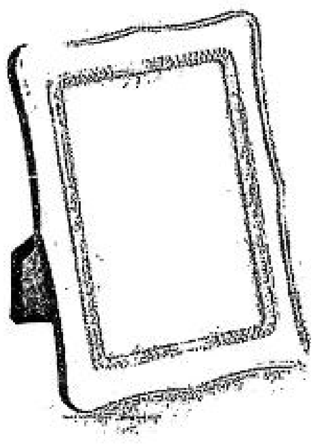

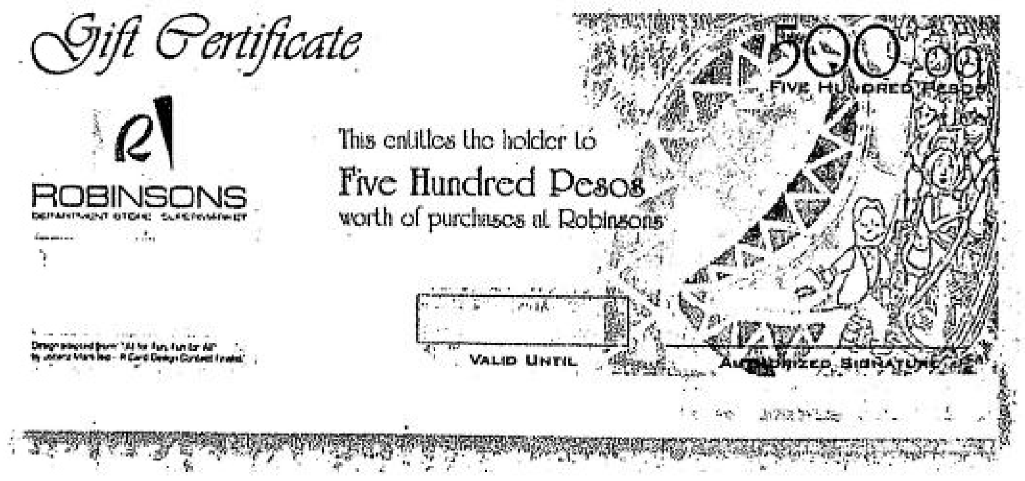

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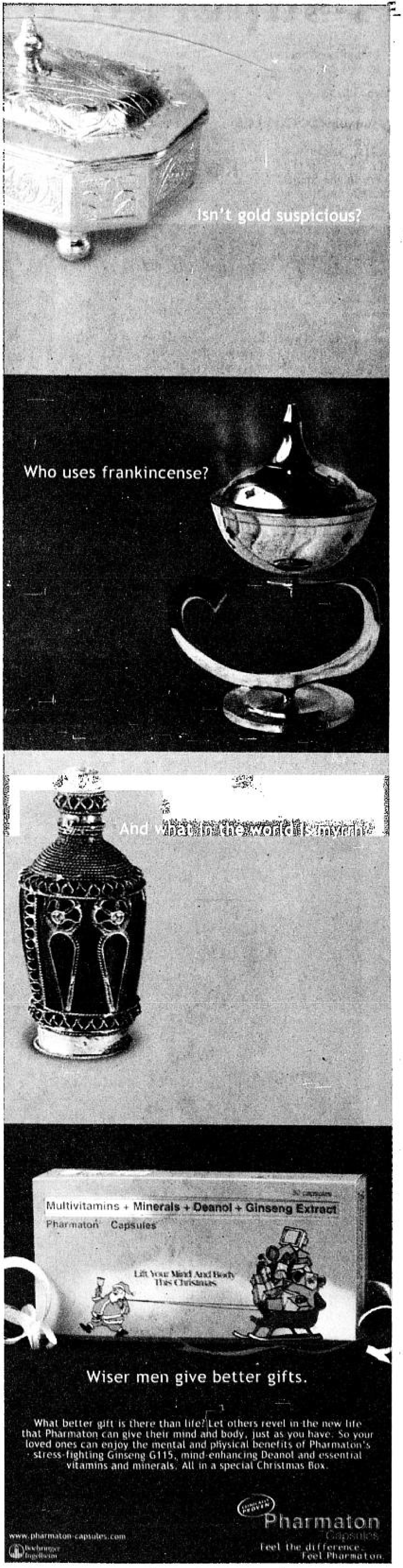

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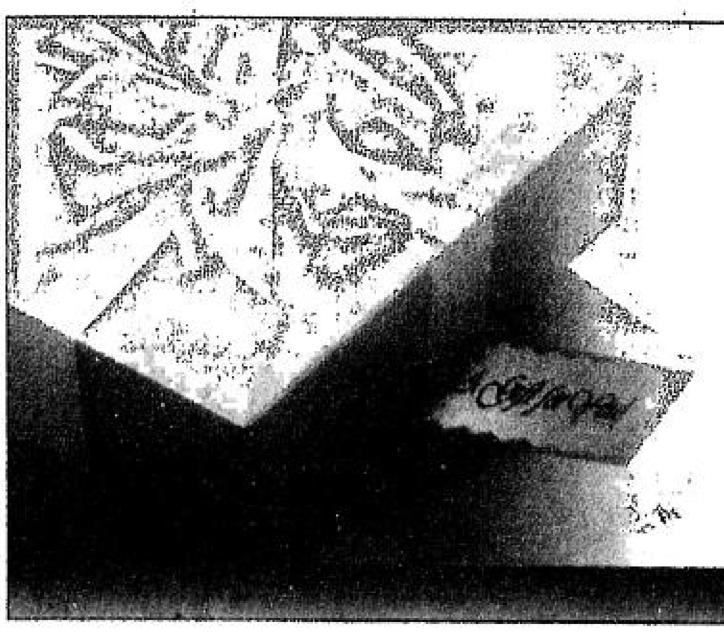

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Daughter of Fortune
By Isabel Allende
Flamingo Books, 2000
399 pages

By Amadís Ma. Guerrero

REVIEW

IN THE MID-1980S, with her novel "The House of the Spirits" translated into English, Isabel Allende reached an international audience and reaped worldwide acclaim. Her first novel was a sweeping, irresistible saga about the fortunes and misfortunes of a family, the Truebas, in a turbulent unidentified Latin American country (actually Chile).

Allende is a niece of the democratically elected Chilean President Salvador Allende, killed in a brutal coup in the early 1970s. And Isabel wrote the novel "to keep alive the memory" of her family and country.

She later wrote two other bestselling novels, "Of Love and Shadows," "Eva Luna" and a collection of stories.

An exile in Venezuela for many years, Allende migrated to California in the late 1980s, which became the setting for her fourth novel, "The Infinite Plan," published in the early 1990s and another huge success.

With each novel, Allende goes back farther in time. Now, after a long interval (and two books of nonfiction) comes her latest, "Daughter of Fortune (La Hija de la Fortuna)." And it is another major novel, worth the long wait.

> With this latest opus, Isabel Allende reinforces her claim as one of the leading novelists of the Americas

Intransigence

"Daughter of Fortune" is all about "the intransigence of love." A feminist friend, in fact, could not finish the book as she was so irritated by the actions of the heroine Eliza Sommers, headstrong and courageous, yet a slave to love, totally dominated by the image of her lover, Joaquin Andieta.

Seen through nonfeminist eyes, however, the novel is as absorbing read, often unputdownable. Allende's sweeping style pulls the reader along. It is often expository, the situations merely narrated instead of dramatized, with long paragraphs and snippets of dialogue in between.

The style owes much to Gabriel Garcia Marquez, rapid fire and staccato. But Allende is no mere copycat, as she has touched on material the Colombian master has not explored.

Allende has the lyrical bent of a poet, with a novelist's narrative powers and gift for vivid characterization.

There's Eliza, bilingual, "a girl with soft curves and a delicate face," a foundling brought up to be a lady in Valparaiso, Chile, by the Englishwoman Rose Summers, very proper but inwardly passionate, "a woman with a past."

There is a host of other major and minor figures, all fully realized with a stroke of Allende's pen. Eliza's best friend is the young Chinese sage, Tao Chi'en, who helps her embark on a mad quest for Joaquin Andieta, who has left for San Francisco, California to seek his fortune: It is the 1850s, the period of the feverish Gold Rush.

Vivid

Relying on her imagination and, doubtless, lots of research, Allende manages to vividly recreate those wild days, when tens of thousands of men from different parts of the globe descended upon California, hoping to get rich quick.

Some fulfilled their ambitions while others fell by the wayside, victims of violence and discrimination.

EVOCATIVE yet realistic novel

In those days, it took a ship from Valparaiso 52 days to reach San Francisco, then "a community opening like a fan on the hillsides, a jumble of campaign tents, wood and cardboard shacks, and a few simple but well-constructed buildings; the first in that mushrooming town."

In contrast to the "splendid beauty" of the bay was the "awesome anarchy" of the port: "An enormous camp for men on the move, all races flowed together in the muddy alleyways..."

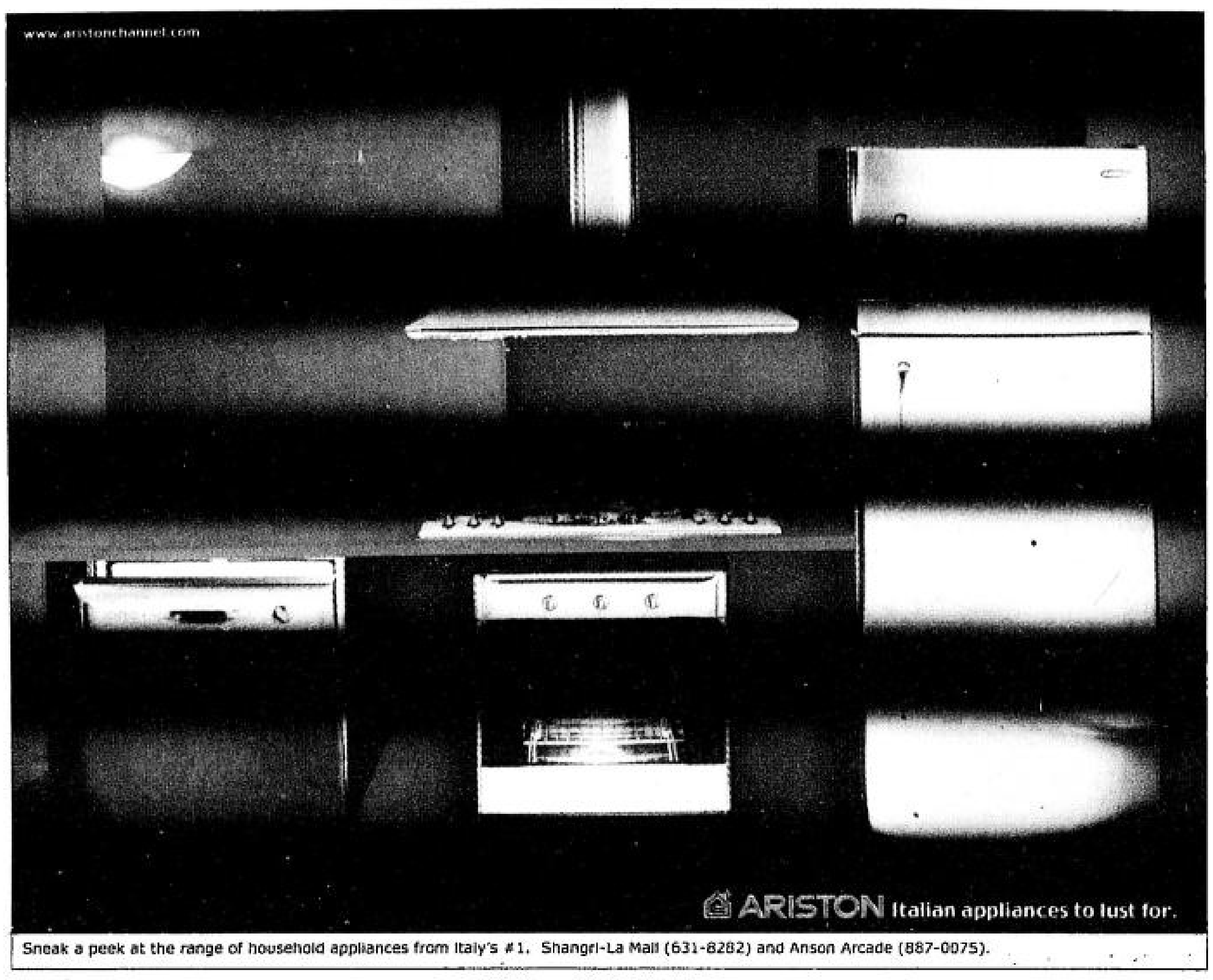
California during the Gold Rush was an ecological nightmare (there was no Greenpeace then). By 1850, 100,000 miners were "moving mountains, diverting rivers, pulverizing rocks, displacing tons of sand and digging monumental pits."

Disguised as a Latino boy and, at times, as the deaf-mute younger brother of Tao Chi'en, Eliza has many adventures. She is transformed by the experience, and discovers freedom: "... in those last months of riding across the golden landscape of California, she felt that she was flying free, like a condor."

"Daughter of Fortune" is inventive, evocative, imaginative yet at times brutally realistic. With its surprises and twists, it reads like a superior telenovela.

With this latest opus, Isabel Allende reinforces her claim as one of the leading novelists of the Americas. She occupies a niche just below Gabriel Garcia Marquez, which makes her a great storyteller, and a near-great novelist.

Available at Page One and Goodwill Bookstores



Sneak a peek at the range of household appliances from Italy's #1. Shangri-La Mall (631-8282) and Anson Arcade (887-0075).

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Jose David Lapuz on Jose Rizal's novels

LEADING Rizal scholar Jose David Lapuz will tackle "Jose Rizal as Novelist" in a lecture at the Center for Creative Writing and Studies (CCWS) of the University of Santo Tomas on Dec. 7 at 3 p.m. The lecture is part of the CCWS' observance of Human Rights Day and the Feast of the Immaculate Conception on Dec. 8.

Lapuz, commissioner of the Unesco and professor of international relations, political science, and Rizal at the UST Faculty of Arts and Letters, will tackle the sociological, historical and literary moorings of Rizal's fiction.

Panelists include National Artist F. Sionil Jose, poet-critic and CCWS director Ophelia Alcantara-Dimalanta, and UST junior writing associates and Palanca-winning writers Michael Coroza and Jose Victor Torres.

Venue is the CCWS conference room, 1/F St. Raymund's (AB-Commerce) Building, UST campus, España, Manila.

The public is invited. Seats are limited. Call 731-3101 local 8281.

'Power' philosophy rules bestseller list

JAMES Lee Valentine, an inspirational and successful seminar speaker, is the man behind the "Power" book series. "Making a positive difference—inspirationally" is his winning motto. For him, writing books and giving seminars are his joys in life. Through his Power series of personal development books, VCDs and seminars, he aims to make a real difference in the world by having a profound positive impact on the lives of those who put his "Power" philosophy into practice.

At the age of 38, this young Englishman has already written many "Power" books based on his own unique blend of inspiration, empowerment and personal development.

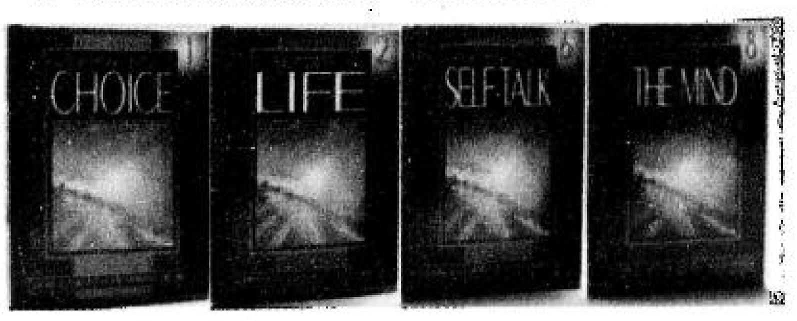
In "Pure Power: Unleash Your Ultimate Potential," Valentine shares a surefire formula to positively influence the reader's life and help him become committed to personal excellence.

In "The Power of Choice: How to Direct Your Ultimate Destiny," he challenges readers to harness the power of the mind to direct their destiny and discover that choice is truly the greatest power.

In "The Power of Life: How to Live Your Life to the Maximum," Valentine reminds readers that the past does not equal the future. He says, "Today we can start our lives anew."

Valentine also discusses self-talk, encouraging readers to repeat affirmations to themselves at any time and place whether silently or aloud. He says self-talk of an optimistic nature can be practiced while walking first thing in the morning, standing in line at a store, working out at a gym, sitting in a room waiting for an appointment and even while lying in bed before going to sleep at night.

Valentine's "Power" book series is available at National Bookstore and Powerbooks.



INFOTECH
LEO MAGNO, Editor

Data mining: Boon and bane

BY ANSBERT JOAQUIN
PDI Central Luzon Desk

OLONGAPO CITY—Who will be the next president of the United States? Ask the data miners.

With the advent of information technology, huge amounts of data on virtually every subject man has ever studied instantly have become available.

Who needs all these data? At the outset, very little benefit was derived from the database available in cyberspace. The initial problem was access to these data.

All data out there can be likened to volumes of records in an office without a filing system.

In a quest to harness all of these data, enterprising web wizards made billions of dollars almost overnight by founding search engines which sought to classify data and help in research by narrowing the field of choice to the particular subject an Internet surfer is interested in.

One search engine, AskJeeves.com, made waves a few years ago by allowing the use of complete sentences in the search mode.

Others made their pile by providing specialized interlinked websites about particular subjects of interest. All of them earn revenues by offering advertising space in the form of banner advertisements, or by charging for the number of times a surfer is enticed to visit a client's website (hopefully to buy offered services or products).

Search engines and specialized websites helped make the data available in cyberspace more accessible, by making them easier to find.

Recent developments also suggest that even their efforts at providing access to all of the untapped data floating in the Worldwide Web may still be considered wasteful if not utilized.

After all, the huge amounts of data in cyberspace mean nothing unless they are (a) accessible and (b) utilized for some useful purpose.

The current trend is geared more towards greater utilization.

Industry experts have christened this new phenomenon as "data mining."

An advertisement on an IT magazine asks whether one would like to "know more about your clients than they know about themselves."

While the actual intent of the advertiser is to familiarize big corporations with the buying habits of their clients, the advertisement sounds a bit menacing and may seem to warn of an intrusion into a person's privacy.

Images of "big brother" flit through the consciousness. And if indications are proven right, chances are data mining will affect most aspects of our lives from our choice of toothpaste to such major decisions as our choice of president.

But how does all of it work?

Basically, data mining is just a combination of the gathering of huge amounts of data and the use of statistics to identify trends. Pretty simple on the surface, but very complicated and laborious in reality.

To illustrate this, a search engine company may provide assistance to surfers doing research on subjects of their choice.

While the surfer is in the website, he is subjected to numerous banner advertisements offering various products and services. When the surfer clicks on one of these advertisements, "cookies" imbedded in the advertisements inform the search engine company of a "click."

Some advertisers also require or request the surfer entering their websites to provide information about themselves such as age, sex, marital status, income level, credit card number, etc.

In certain cases these pieces of information are also made accessible to the search engine company.

Then of course, should the surfer get enticed to avail of the products or services on offer, the information is again provided to both the search engine and the company providing the product or service.

To complement these data, statistics come into play. Using data from hundreds of thousands of such Web "clicks," buying patterns of target consumer groups can now be identified.

Results may range indicating who are under an age group, income bracket, sex, nationality and religious affiliation that are more likely to buy certain products or services.

By identifying these factors, companies can now mix and match different consumer profiles with the most effective marketing strategy for each, all done by using statistics to establish patterns or trends.

And with all the trends established, companies that are using data mining are empowered not only in adapting their strategies to match consumer buying patterns, but also in influencing consumer decisions.

There are many other fields of endeavor where data mining could help.

Actual mining explorations benefit by having the various seismic data and satellite photos of prospective sites color-coded and projected into huge screens to better show patterns where mineral deposits are more likely to be.

Medicine gets a boost when doctors can use trends to identify the most successful methods of cure. Or discover new drugs, drug combinations and treatments.

Product research is made easier by the use of data mining to identify potential engineering flaws while still on the computer simulation stage.

Traffic management on roads is made easier by being able to predict when vehicle flows peak, enabling government agencies to devise the most effective measures to ease traffic flow.

Education can use data mining to identify the most effective means of delivering instructions.

Manufacturing can use trend identification to improve overall efficiency.

Government agencies will appreciate trend identification in analyzing criminal behavior patterns, even to the extent of preventing crime from happening rather than just punishing criminals.

Politicians can even use data mining to influence public opinion and win elections.

For while the threat it poses to our privacy seems very real, there are numerous benefits that could be derived from data mining.

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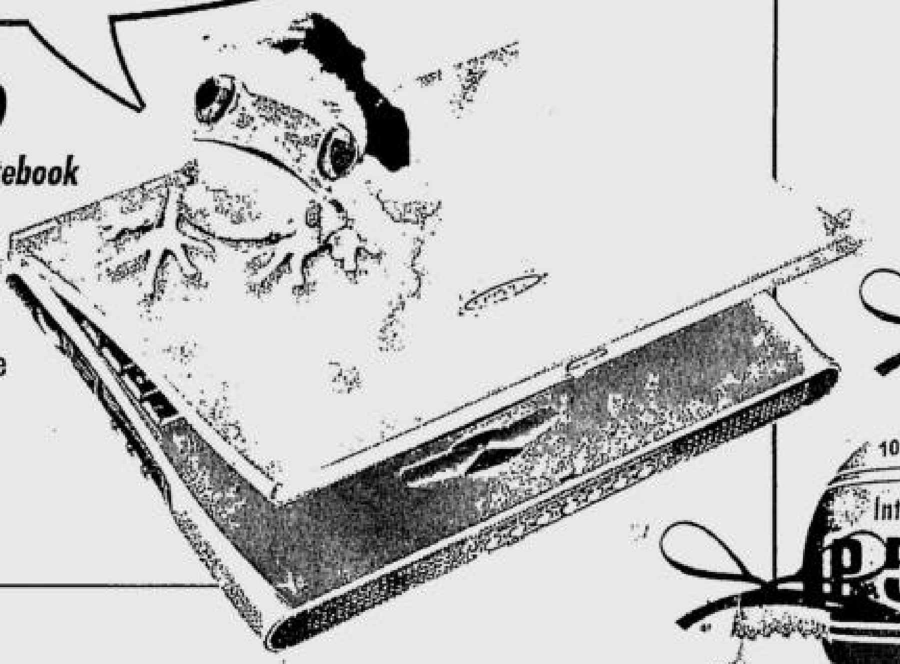

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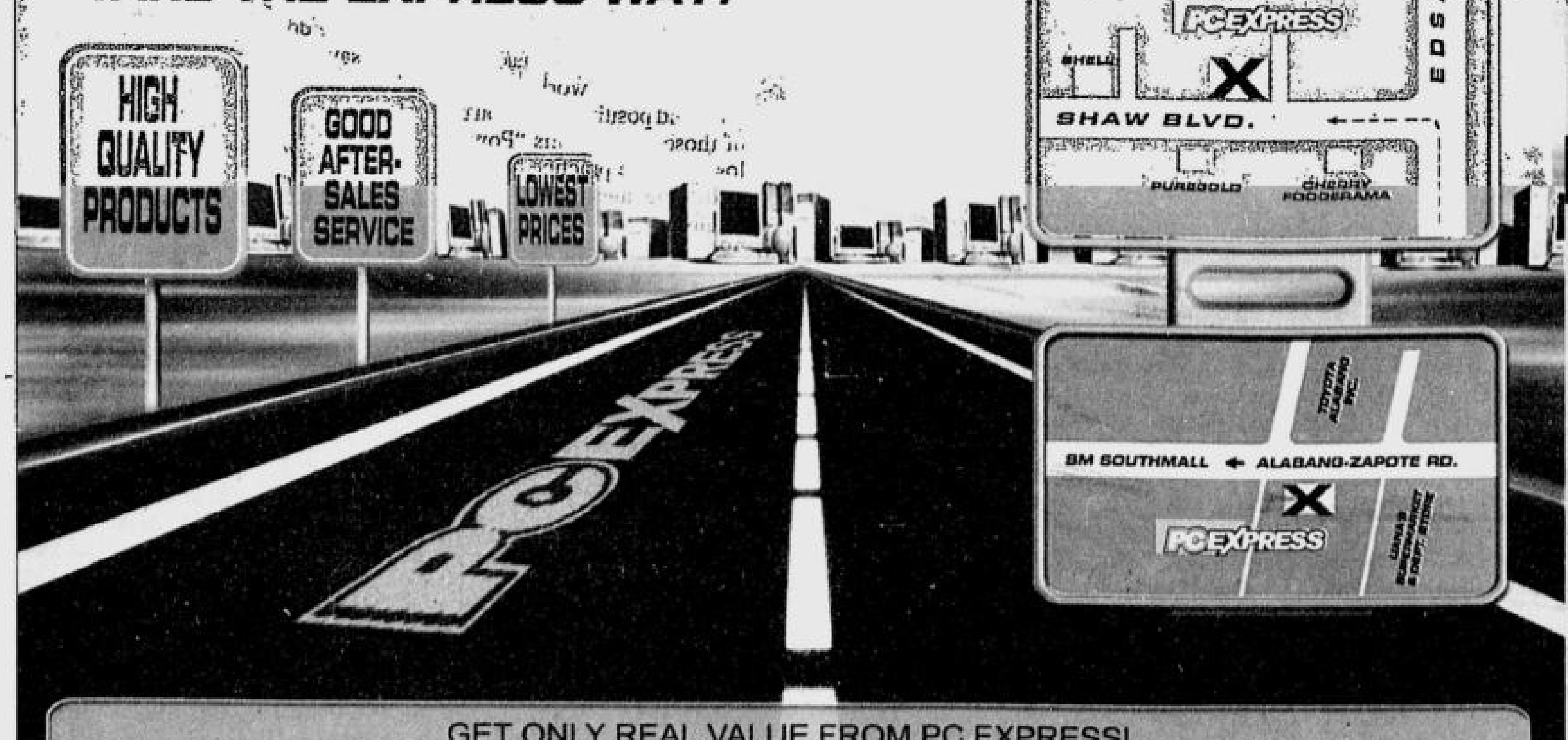

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First Filipino free Web-based instant messaging app launched

BRAINSHARE Messenger, said to be the first Filipino Web-based messaging application is now available at Brainshare Online (www.brainshare.com.ph), a Philippine-based portal.

According to Jerry Liao, operations manager of Brainshare Online, Brainshare Messenger allows users to enjoy the benefits of instant messaging, one of which is sending messages online and offline for free.

"Next to e-mail, I believe Web services, particularly instant messaging will be the next most sought-after application on the Web. It is a combination of chat and e-mail," said Liao.

Liao added that Brainshare Messenger is just part of the full suite of communication applications to be offered by Brainshare Online, a top 10 destination among Asian websites, according to 100hot.com

Liao said instant messaging will bring more value to Brainshare visitors, as it will provide instant feedback allowing users to know the status of their messages.

"More importantly to our corporate users, it facilitates faster decision-making, enabling users to quickly move from finding others online to collaborating in real-time on virtually any business process or project," Liao said.

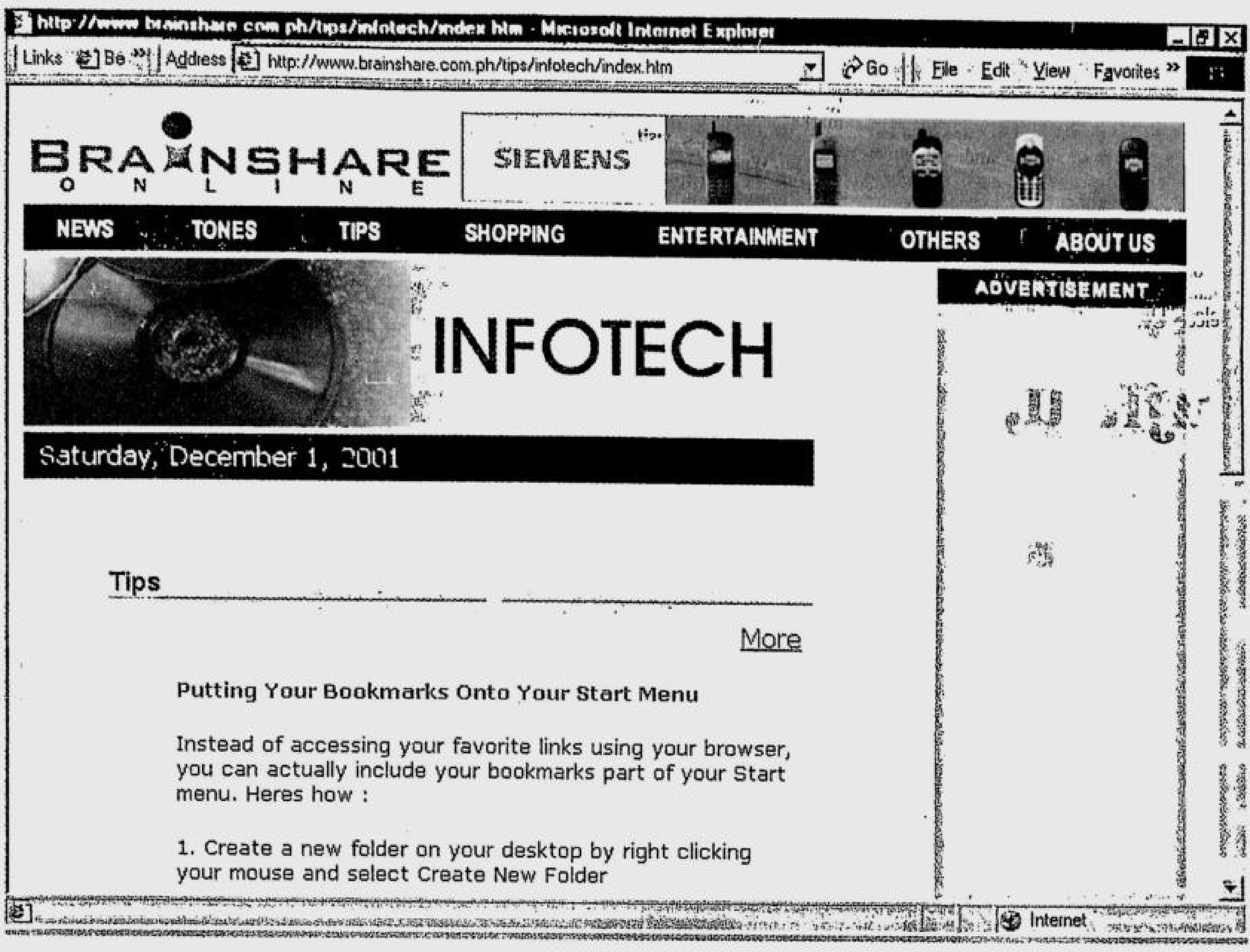
Liao admits however that Brainshare Messenger may not have the same fancy interface as with other instant messaging applications.

"We concentrate more on its functionality. Our first version of Brainshare Messenger allows users to communicate privately or engage into a conference," Liao said.

The second version of the free application will provide video and audio capability, file sharing, whiteboards for illustrations that can be seen by those who are part of the discussion, he added.

The third version will be called Brainshare Unified Messaging, combining e-mail, chat, forum, SMS and fax into one. Liao said this is the "ultimate goal" of Brainshare Online.

Users can avail of the free Brainshare Messaging service by accessing www.brainshare.com.ph and registering at the site's Brainiacs Club.



Saturday, December 1, 2001

Tips

More

Putting Your Bookmarks Onto Your Start Menu

Instead of accessing your favorite links using your browser, you can actually include your bookmarks part of your Start menu. Heres how :

1. Create a new folder on your desktop by right clicking your mouse and select Create New Folder

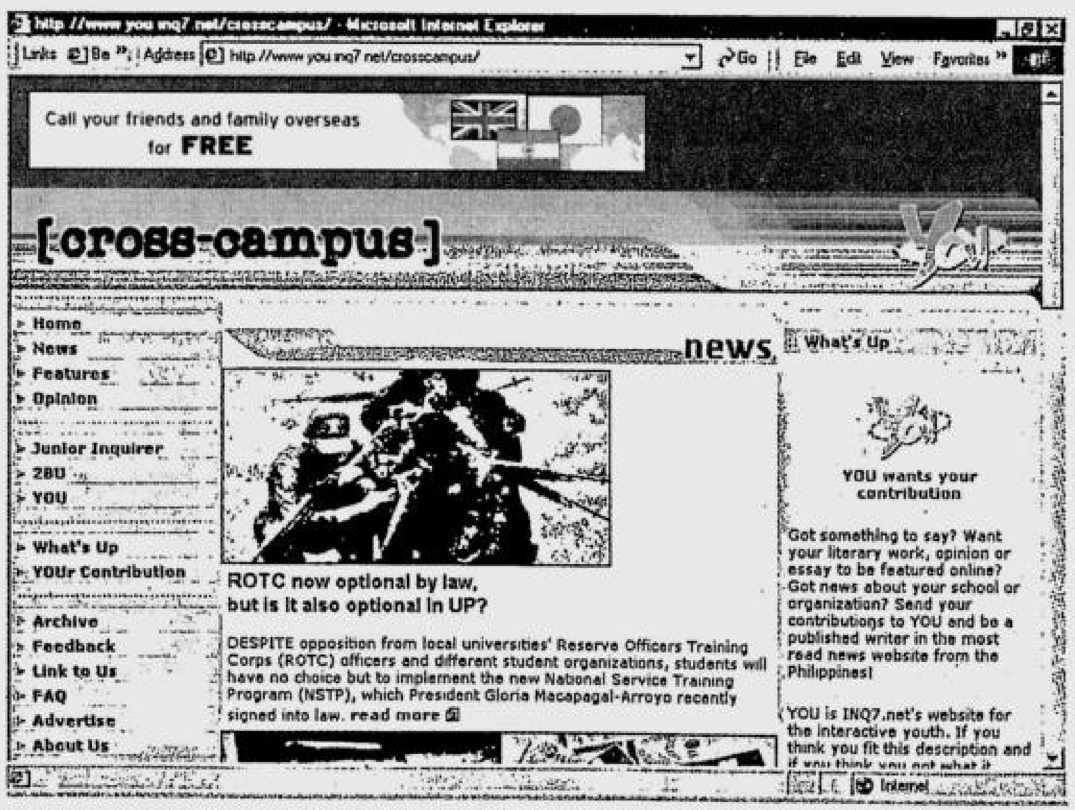
Youth site features stories for, about and by students

STUDENTS usually refer to bulletin boards or their school organs to get updates on what's happening in and out of campus. Now, they can also go to an online destination to check out the latest in the campus scene and find out what's happening in their school and others.

INQ7 Interactive Inc., the online news delivery organization of the Philippine Daily Inquirer and GMA Network, has launched YOU, a website for today's interactive youth. YOU, which can be found at you.inq7.net, is the umbrella site for 2bU!, Junior Inquirer and Cross-Campus. Junior Inquirer is the INQUIRER print's regular Saturday paper for preteens, while 2bU! is the Wednesday subsection of the INQUIRER Lifestyle section.

Cross-Campus is an online original, culling written pieces from students and giving them an online venue to publish their written work. It gives students a chance to have their essays, poetry, news and feature articles be published online in the most visited website from the Philippines. In addition, Cross-Campus contains the latest news and issues about Philippine universities. In partnership with schools such as the University of the Philippines, the Ateneo de Manila University, the De La Salle University, the College of St. Benilde and Adamson University, Cross-Campus features articles written for and by the students themselves.

Any student from any university may contribute to Cross-Campus and let the world know what's happening in their schools.



ROTC now optional by law, but is it also optional in UP?

DESPITE opposition from local universities' Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) officers and different student organizations, students will have no choice but to implement the new National Service Training Program (NSTP), which President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo recently signed into law. read more

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They can write news articles, opinion pieces, movie reviews, concert reviews and other such materials which today's youth are generally interested in. Simply fill up the contribution form found in the YOU website or e-mail.you@inq7.net.

However, only original materials are accepted, and YOU requires the author's name, e-mail address, school, age and telephone number to be included in the submitted entry. A pool of editors will go through the materials and good ones will make it to the webpages of YOU, instantly making the student a published writer.

Project to provide e-mail to rural schools launched

THE PH Domain Foundation (PHDF) will provide unlimited e-mail connectivity to public high schools around the Philippines through a landmark project ConnectED.ph, in partnership with other private-sector organizations.

The project was launched on Nov. 28 at 3 p.m. at the Jose Abad Santos High School, Binondo, Manila with President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo as the guest of honor.

"While the government also has its own program, the private sector wishes to complement this," said Mylene Anastacio-Soriano, officer in charge of the PHDF and its representative to the ConnectED.ph working committee.

"The PH Domain Foundation envisions a broader computer and Internet-literate community especially in rural areas where the Internet can be used as an empowerment tool, and its involvement in ConnectED.ph can help realize this vision," she said.

For its part, the PHDF will provide the domain names of all 100 schools and provide free e-mail connectivity to 12 rural high schools.

These are the Bernardo Carpio High School in Buhangin, Davao City; Davao City National High School; Al Navarro National High School in Lasang Davao City; Naga National High School in Cebu; Cebu City Science High School; Balagtas Agricultural High School in Balagtas, Bulacan; Guiguinto National High School in Guiguinto, Bulacan; Felicita Bernardina Trade School in Lias, Marilao, Bulacan; Malolos Marine Fishery School and Lab in Bulacan; Sta. Barbara Comprehensive High School in Iloilo; Pavia High School and Amadeo High School.

PHDF, the non-profit organization of dotPH, will also conduct e-mail users' training in these 12 schools to ensure maximum and proper use of the technology. DotPH is the official registry of the Philippine domains (.ph, .com.ph, .net.ph, .org.ph, .ngo.ph and .mil.ph), and is headed by chief executive officer Jose Emmanuel "Joel" Disini.

Partners in ConnectED.ph include the Ayala Foundation, BPI Foundation, Bato Balani Foundation, Coca-Cola Foundation, FIT-ED, Intel Philippines, League of Corporate Foundation, Makati Business Club, Metrobank Foundation, Microsoft Philippines, PH Domain Foundation, Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP), Sarmiento Foundation, Sky Foundation, and Sun Microsystems.

ConnectED.ph is a private sector initiative committed to provide 10-20 computers to each school, peripherals, as well as the Internet and e-mail connectivity, and provide training support to nearly 100 schools in the National Capital Region, Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.

Better looks and sounds for mobiles

IT seems that Philips has a lot to say on the future of mobile display and voice recognition technology.

Just imagine being able to personalize and adjust your mobile phone's sound reproduction with an equalizer. Or being able to watch high-resolution movies or play games in full-color animation. These are just some of the things that will come your way in the very near future.

In 1996, Philips integrated Voice Recognition into mobile phones. Back then, the function was limited to ''Voice Dialing.''

For example, when you say "Darling," the phone automatically calls your loved one. Then in 1999, the company progressed to ''Voice Command,'' allowing you to order the phone to perform a specific function.

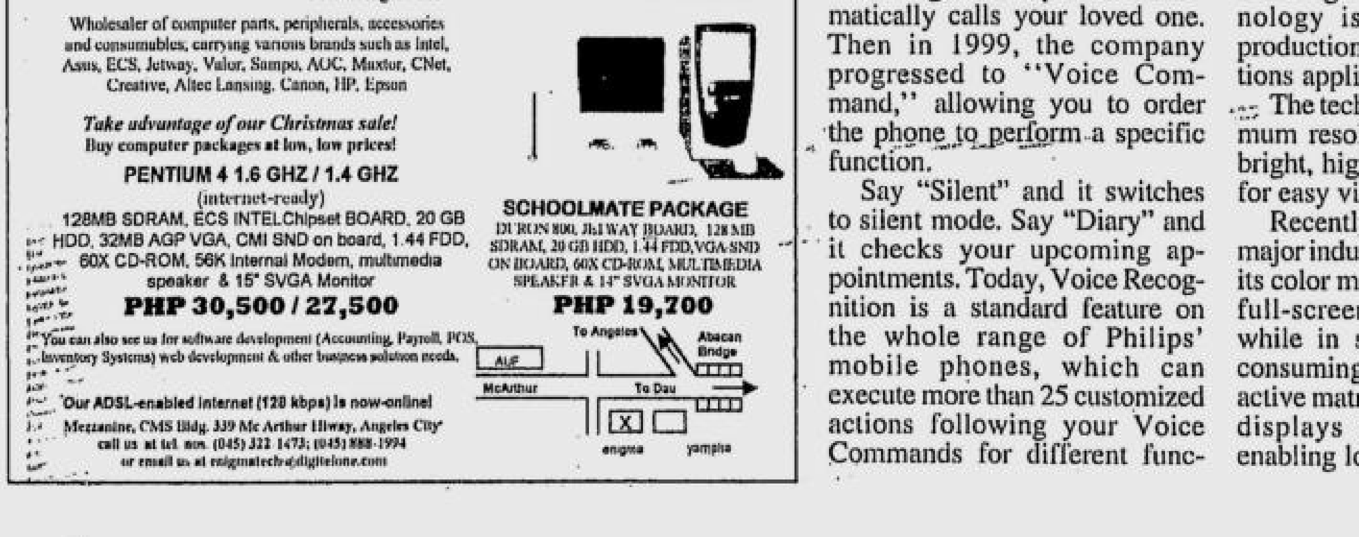
Say "Silent" and it switches to silent mode. Say "Diary" and it checks your upcoming appointments. Today, Voice Recognition is a standard feature on the whole range of Philips' mobile phones, which can execute more than 25 customized actions following your Voice Commands for different functions such as redial, send or read message, WAP and so on.

And all these are secured as your phone recognizes only your voiceprint. Another technological arena that Philips is excited about is mobile display.

The company announced that its polymer-based organic light-emitting diode (OLED) technology is now available for production for telecommunications applications.

The technology features maximum resolution with extremely bright, high contrast capabilities for easy viewing at any angle.

Recently, Philips achieved a major industry breakthrough with its color module that can provide full-screen display capability while in stand-by mode—thus consuming less power than other active matrix color mobile phone displays on the market and enabling longer battery life.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Products for firms without an IT dep't

3COM Corp. recently announced new networking solutions which designed to meet the unique technology requirements of growing companies with little or no technical staff.

As the world's preeminent networking specialist for small to medium businesses, 3Com delivers a range of new Office Connect and SuperStack 3 Baseline products that make it easier and more cost-effective for business customers to install their first network or improve their network's productivity.

Marketing analyst firm Cahners In-Stat ranks 3Com as the No. 1 networking vendor for businesses with limited IT staff or no on-site technical support in the United States.

3Com's networking products help entrepreneurs ensure reliable network connections with customers, partners, suppliers and employees at small offices and branch officers of larger organizations.

The faster flow of information, the sharing of files and the improved response time—all enabled by networking—are the critical elements that boost business.

Making your bookmarks part of your 'Start' menu

By Jerry Liao

POWERTIPS

INSTEAD of accessing your favorite links using your browser, you can actually include your bookmarks in your "Start" menu. Here's how:

1. Create a new folder on your desktop by right clicking your mouse and select "Create New Folder."

2. Give it a name. (Example: Bookmarks)

3. Open your browser and visit your favorite site.

4. Position your mouse pointer on any part of the page and right click your mouse button.

5. Choose "Create Shortcut."

6. You will be prompted whether you want to create a shortcut on to your desktop, select "OK."

7. Go back to your desktop and you will see the shortcut icon of your favorite page.

8. Drag the shortcut icon to your newly created "Bookmarks" folder.

9. The last step is for you to drag your "Bookmarks" folder to your "Start" button.

The next time you want to access your favorite links, simply click on the "Start" button and choose "Shortcut to Bookmarks."

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Fujitsu, software firm strengthen partnership

By Erwin Oliva

FUJITSU Philippines Inc. (FPI), through a technology services and support subsidiary, has forged a partnership with storage software firm Veritas Software Corp. recently to boost its position in the growing storage market industry.

FPI subsidiary WeCare Technology Services Corp. has been designated by Veritas as a "diamond partner reseller," which means the former will be providing after sales services to storage software firms in the Philippines, FPI president Felipe Manalang said.

"We have a global partnership with Veritas but we also have a unique local alliance. So we're not only selling Veritas but also helping implement Veritas software in the country," Manalang added.

Fujitsu foresees an emerging market for storage software in the Philippines.

Manalang, for one, believes that the demand will come from the country's call centers, which record and store calls made by customers.

"Fujitsu has just signed up $3 million worth of business from the call center industry," Manalang said. "I believe there is more business waiting out there because the government through the Board of Investments considers the call center industry as the sixth strategic growth area for the information and communications technology in the Philippines."

He also noted that demand for storage software is also growing in the local animation industry.

Fujitsu's alliance with Veritas is non-exclusive, said SP Tan, regional business development manager for Veritas Asia Pacific. The storage software firm will still continue on selling software to other hardware vendors.

"Through close relationships, cross training and teaming in the field with our partners like FPI, we are able to provide complementary solution strategies that deliver high return on investment," added Larrem Panganiban, country sales manager of Veritas Philippines.

The Veritas software solution is now part of FPI's storage solution package, which is composed of a variety of other storage products, software and services.

Davao exec furious over Net connection report

By Ferdinand O. Zuasola
PDI Mindanao Bureau

MATI, Davao Oriental—Davao Oriental Gov. Maria Elena Palma Gil was furious over an INQUIRER report on Oct. 31 that a firm owned by her executive assistant bagged the contract for the Internet connection of the provincial government.

"The governor was fuming mad because the INQUIRER report was not true. It's erroneous," Nelwin Bravo, Palma Gil's information officer said.

He said what has been awarded last month was a contract for "virtual web hosting" and not for the Internet connection of the provincial government.

But he confirmed that the winning bidder was Mati Telephone Corp. or MTC Net.

Connie Go, Palma Gil's executive assistant, owns MTC Net.

Go admitted that MTC Net also services the Internet needs of the provincial capitol after it won the contract.

"But it (contract) was (awarded) before I (took) the post of executive assistant for the provincial governor. The contract was awarded in 1999 during the time of ex-Gov. Rosalind Lopez," she said.

Go said she does not own MTC Net but "right now I serve as consultant (of MTC Net)."

A local official close to Palma Gil said the governor was contemplating on filing charges against the INQUIRER and this correspondent for the "malicious report."

Bravo confirmed that Palma Gil was indeed consulting with the province's legal officer, lawyer Alejandro Aquino, for the possible filing of libel suit.

Bravo said it was also misleading to report that Palma Gil and Go refused to talk with the INQUIRER about the bidding. He said their "very tight" schedule made them unavailable for comment.

The INQUIRER waited for two days to get Palma Gil and Go's side, but a staff at the governor's office finally said the two were not inclined to make comments.

The controversy stemmed from a complaint by losing bidders over the inclusion of MTC Net in the bidding for "virtual web hosting" in the provincial government.

They said there was a clear case of conflict of interest because MTC Net is owned by Go.

Documents from the provincial general services office showed that MTC Net's bid price for the virtual web hosting was at P22,000; Sky Net, P31,200; and Moscom Internet, P23,755.

The feisty Palma Gil even went on radio to deny the alleged irregularity in the awarding of contract for the virtual web hosting, saying that the controversy was mere concoctions by "dregs in the media."

This was not the first time that Palma Gil was irked by media reports.

The self-described "media shy" governor have stopped holding her regular press conference at the Capitol after the INQUIRER reported that local traders who supported her candidacy in this year's election stand to benefit from the planned privatization of the Menzi Tourism Complex, the only upscale hotel here owned by the provincial government. Palma Gil herself admitted that businessmen who supported her election campaign would become the new owners of the Menzi Hotel, formerly owned by Marcos crony Hanz Menzi.

She said the hotel's operation was draining the provincial government's coffer. "The hotel is losing, so we better privatize it," Palma Gil said.

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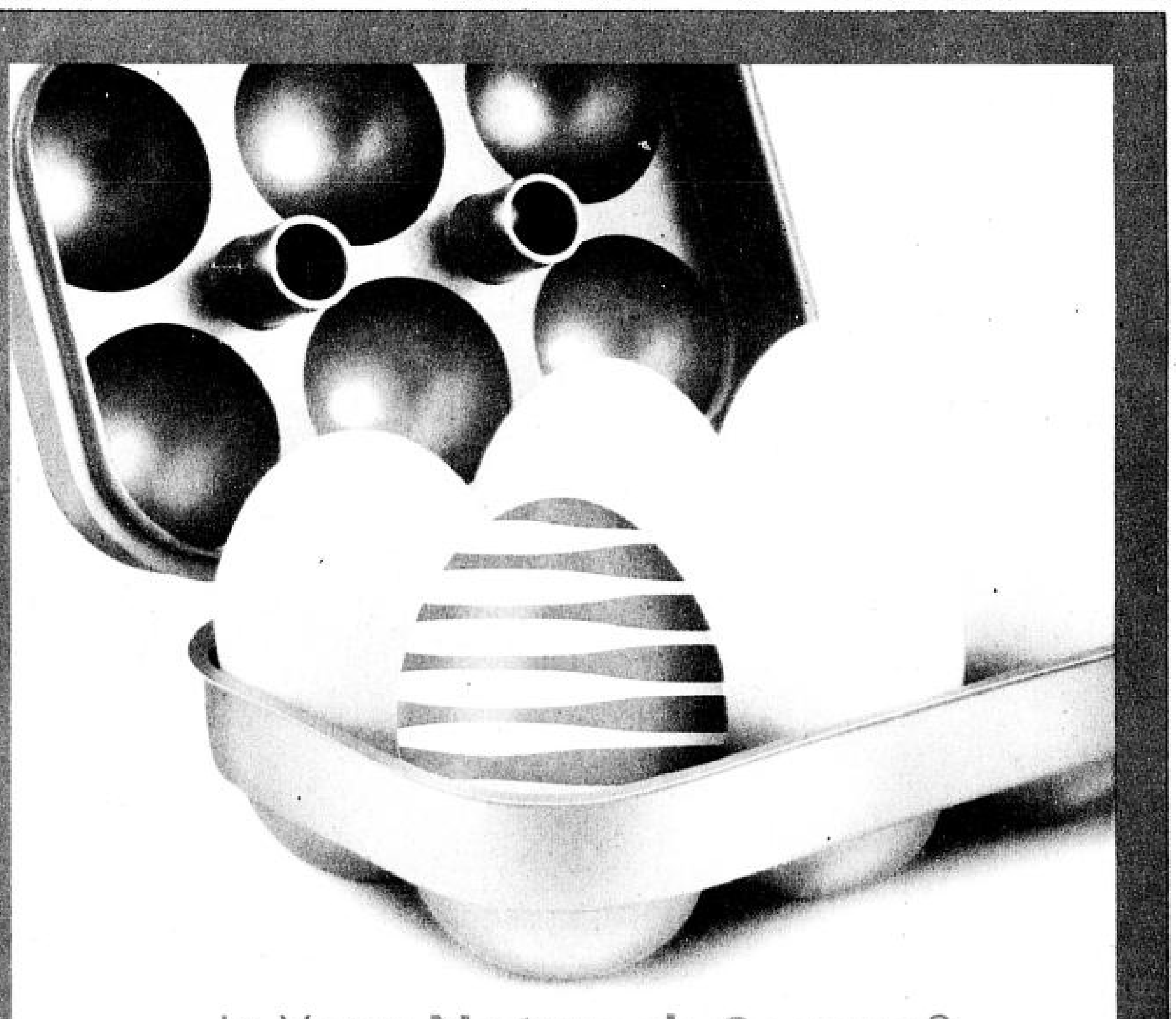

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